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**FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS, INC.
TO BECOME
NEW YORK STATE ORNITHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION, INC.**

Stanley R. Lincoln
PO Box 296, Somers NY 10589

At the Annual Meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc. on 1 November 2003, at the Chautauqua Institution, Chautauqua, NY, the Council of Delegates approved the proposal to change the name of the organization to New York State Ornithological Association, Inc. It will continue to operate temporarily under the original name until all the legal requirements have been met.

For some time there had been discussions about whether the organization would benefit from a new name that better describes what it is and does. At the 2002 Annual Meeting in Owego, the question was formally presented and discussed by the Council of Delegates. Though no decisions could be made then, there was general feeling that a name change should be pursued.

During the ensuing six months, the Board of Directors asked for input from the Member Clubs on possible names, along with their preferences from a number of names under consideration. After many discussions and debates, the Board recommended the name be changed to New York State Ornithological Association, Inc., and advised the membership of the proposal.

Following an open and extensive discussion of the matter at the 2003 Annual Meeting, the Council of Delegates approved the change by a vote of 69 percent; it then unanimously approved the required change to the By-Laws to reflect this decision. Some Member Clubs had negative or conflicting opinions on the wisdom of making this change, the most common objection relating to the perceived "professional" implications of the word ornithological.

In considering the new name, it is helpful to turn to the purpose of the organization as stated in the By-Laws: "The purposes of this Corporation are to further the study of birds, bird life and lore; to foster, inculcate and disseminate knowledge and appreciation thereof; to preserve and protect birds and other wildlife and their environment; and to educate the public in the need for conserving natural areas and resources. To achieve these purposes, the Corporation shall be empowered to conduct educational programs; publish and distribute documents and other printed matter; cooperate with governmental agencies and other educational and charitable organizations with similar objectives; and to document the ornithology of the state, and maintain the official Checklist of the Birds of New York State."

The primary reason for making the change is to better describe what the organization is and what it does. It is also intended to send a clearer message that membership is open to all who have an interest, individuals as well as clubs, and by so doing to potentially attract a wider membership to support expanded and improved operations.

The unique activities of the organization, all ornithological, include:

- Publication of *The Kingbird*, New York's journal of ornithology, now in its 53rd year of uninterrupted quarterly publication.
- Appointment, direction and sanction of the New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC), which evaluates ornithological records.
- Publication of the official *Checklist of Birds of New York State*, based on NYSARC decisions.
- A formidable history of initiating, and with others as necessary, coordinating the preparation and publication of books documenting the ornithology of the state.

These include:

Birds of New York by J. Bull (1974)

The Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State

edited by R. Andrie and J. Carroll (1988)

Birds of New York State edited by E. Levine (1998)

The Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State, a major update underway and planned for publication in about 2006.

While not a reason itself for the choice of name, it is certainly noteworthy that there are at least 35 other states with bird-related organizations having missions and programs similar to ours here in New York and 27 of them have names which include "ornithological" or variations thereof. Examples include: Connecticut Ornithological Association and Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology.

Perhaps also of interest here is that two of our Charter Member Clubs, both being continuous in their membership and support, are the Buffalo Ornithological Society and the Genesee Ornithological Society. Those two groups jointly hosted the first organizing meeting, and the Genesee Ornithological Society was the host of the first formal Annual Meeting at the Rochester Museum of Arts and Science in 1948.

For a history of the formation of the organization and its first 50 years of operations and activities, readers are referred to the Golden Anniversary Issue of *The Kingbird*, Vol. 48, Supplement 1, September 1988, by S. Lincoln.

It is important to point out that this name change is not intended to, and does not, in any way change the purposes, activities or structure of the organization. The 52 Member Clubs continue to be, through their appointments to the Council of Delegates, the voting body of the newly named New York State Ornithological Association. And birding activities by the state's birders continue to be recognized and encouraged as the indispensable basis and support of the mission of the association.



REPORT OF THE NYSARC COMMITTEE FOR 2001

Over the past year, the New York State Avian Records Committee (hereafter NYSARC or the Committee) deliberated on a total of 177 reports covering 93 separate species, an all-time high for the Committee. The reports involved 78 separate sightings from 2001, an additional 16 reports from previous years, 9 second-round and 6 third-round reviews from 2000, and one second round from 1996. The increase in contributions is gratifying and marks a steady upward trend in reporting. Ultimately this means that the birding community is working together to create a more comprehensive account of the New York State avifauna. Part of the increase reflects the growing use of the Internet as a means to exchange birding information. The Committee has made good use of this new medium to (i) highlight the reporting procedure, (ii) provide a simple mechanism for submitting written reports and other forms of documentation and (iii) remind birders of the species requiring review that have been reported across the state.

Written descriptions and photographs were provided by 100 separate observers, and one or more sightings were reported from 30 out of the 62 counties in the state. Counties with the most reports were Suffolk (24), Nassau (22) and Oswego (18), a notable shift from the previous few years. In all, 158 reports (89%) were accepted and testifies to the high quality of the majority of the submissions. 17 were not accepted because of insufficient documentation or because the descriptions were inconsistent with known identification criteria. Multiple reports were received for 37% of the sightings, with 35 diligent individuals sending in two or more reports. Sightings for which there are multiple submissions are invariably stronger than those from a single person. Details in one account help fill in the gaps in another, and where the descriptions overlap they provide confirmation of the specific details. Too often observers assume that someone else will submit a detailed report and forego the responsibility. As a result, well-watched birds may be poorly documented or missed altogether.

All records are sight records unless otherwise indicated. For accepted reports, the names of observers submitting documentation are given in parenthesis and the names of all contributors are listed in full at the end of the report. Occasionally, the names of the original finders (when known) are given in the narrative that accompanies each species entry. The records in this report are arranged taxonomically following the 44th supplement to the *AOU Check-List of North American Birds* (Banks et al. 2003). Those contributing photographs, video or sketches are given special mention in the narrative. With the rapid advances in affordable camera equipment, we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of rare species documented by still photography or video. It is hard to overstate the value of photographs both as tools to identification and as a permanent record of the sighting. Photographs do not need to be 'magazine quality' and a simple 'snap' taken with an instamatic camera can often capture critical information. This year we saw clear examples of documentation using unsophisticated camera equipment. The taking of photographs by holding a camera to the eyepiece of a telescope - a technique known as 'digiscoping' - can be remarkably effective. Inexpensive digital cameras are particularly good for this but the approach also works with conventional single lens reflex (SLR) cameras. There are many web

sites that offer advice on digiscoping and we encourage readers to read the article by Rex Stanford in an earlier issue of this journal (Stanford 2002). Digital images, imported directly from the camera or from scanning of slides or prints can be sent to the committee via e-mail. We will also accept copies of video or audiotapes. Please note that all forms of multimedia documentation must be accompanied by a written report.

All of the records reviewed by NYSARC (including written descriptions, photographs, videotapes, and audio recordings), irrespective of acceptance, are archived at Cornell University in Ithaca and are accessible to the public upon request. The Committee may choose to revisit reports in the light of new information.

Who Should Submit Reports?

A common misconception persists that only the initial discoverer of a bird should submit a report. In actuality, all observers of a rarity (even if it is seen by hundreds of people) should submit written descriptions and/or other forms of documentation (e.g. photographs, video or sketches). As a good rule of thumb, never assume that others will submit anything! A significant number of multi-observer sightings go undocumented and complacency may be partly to blame. We often receive minimal reports that presume that co-observers will provide the missing details. Sadly, in some cases the more comprehensive reports have not materialized and the abbreviated reports are not complete enough to stand on their own. Submission of multiple independent reports provides a more compelling and detailed account of the sighting, increasing the likelihood of acceptance. Concern of over burdening the committee is not a tenable excuse.

The Review Process

We are often asked how the review process works and why it sometimes takes so long. The process itself is relatively simple. When received by the secretary, all reports are duplicated and transmitted to the seven voting members of the committee who write detailed commentaries (known as 'review sheets') and cast their votes independently. These are returned to the secretary and the votes are tabulated. Each report is then listed as 'accepted' or 'not accepted'. At least six committee members must vote in the affirmative for an immediate accept; similarly if there are five or more votes against, then the record is not accepted (see McGowan and Burke 2000). If no consensus is reached, the reports are sent out again along with the seven review sheets (so-called 'second round'). This allows each committee member to consider the arguments made by the other six before casting a second vote. If necessary, records may even be circulated for a third time ('third round').

Another common concern is the length of time it takes for a report to be reviewed and for NYSARC to publish its decision. First, as indicated above, NYSARC receives a large number of reports and these take a considerable amount of time for the secretary to compile, duplicate and distribute and for each committee member to review carefully. For a fraction of the reports, a decision is

not reached in the first round of voting and these must be re-circulated through the committee for a second and sometimes third round of review, thus adding to the delay. Secondly, many reports are received weeks or months after the sighting, and so we generally cannot begin reviewing until well into the following year. We do our best to work quickly but carefully. Prompt submission, careful preparation of reports and, where possible, submission of multiple independent reports will help us keep the lag to a minimum. The continued cooperation of bird clubs and Regional editors in coordinating or encouraging submissions is greatly appreciated.

How To Submit Reports

To learn how to prepare and submit a report, please visit the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs web site:

<http://nybirds.org/NYSARC/NYSARChome.htm>

The site also includes a regularly updated list of species reviewed by NYSARC, information on the composition of the Committee, a gallery of rare or unusual birds photographed in the state, and perhaps most importantly, copies of previous annual reports. NYSARC encourages observers to submit documentation for all species on the review list, as well as species previously unrecorded in New York State. We also encourage observers to read the article by committee member Willie D'Anna on the documentation and reporting process (D'Anna 2003). The Committee is grateful to Carena Pooth and Barbara Butler for redesigning and regularly updating the NYSARC web site. Documentation (written and photographic) or correspondence for the Committee should be sent to:

Jeanne Skelly, Secretary for NYSARC
420 Chili-Scottsville Road, Churchville, NY 14428
E-mail: jdsKelly@frontiernet.net

NYSARC Activities

At the end of December 2002 Dr. Robert Andrlé completed his current term and rotated off the Committee. As regular readers of this report will know, Bob Andrlé has served on the Committee since its inception in 1977. He was appointed as the Chair in 1988, replacing Fritz G. Scheider. After more than a decade at the helm, Dr. Andrlé stepped down as Chair in 1999 but remained as a voting member until the beginning of this year. We thank him for his many years of service to the Committee. Dominic Sherony of Rochester replaces Dr. Andrlé as one of the seven voting members of the Committee.

Highlights of the 2001 Report

The highlights of 2001 were the additions of **Black-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa limosa*), **Calliope Hummingbird** (*Stellula calliope*) and **Hammond's Flycatcher** (*Empidonax hammondi*) to the New York State Checklist. With these three new species, the official state list rises to **460** species.

2001 Reports Accepted

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis hutchinsii*)

2001-36-A Two individuals, Rt 77, Town of Alabama, Genesee Co., 1 Apr (Willie D'Anna); 2001-46-A One, Point au Roche State Park, Buckmantown, Clinton Co., 30 Oct, (David Hoag). Various known as Hutchins's or Richardson's Goose, this northern subspecies *B. c. hutchinsii* has at times been treated as a distinct species known as Tundra Goose (Aldrich, 1946). Observers in western NY, principally in Region 1, are reporting this form with increasing regularity. Often these reports involve small flocks mixed with other Canada Geese. The Committee remains interested in carefully documented reports of this taxon and other small Canada Geese so that we can more accurately ascertain their occurrence in New York State.

Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*)

2001-8-A One, in a flock of ~2000 Snow Geese, on Six Corners Rd., Seneca Co., 21 Mar (Matthew J. Williams); 2001-11-A/B One adult, near the Village of Lyons, Wayne Co., 31 Mar -1 Apr, (Willie D'Anna, Kurt Fox); 2001-51-A/B One on Hutton Rd., Oakfield, Genesee Co., 1 - 8 Apr, (William Watson, Willie D'Anna); 2001-61-A One, Marratooka Lake, Mattituck, Suffolk Co., 13 Dec, (Paul H. Gillen, Jr.); 2001-74-A One, Smith Road, Town of Veteran, Chemung Co., 17 Mar (David Russell); 2001-76-A One, Oakfield, Genesee Co., 31 Mar (Brendan Klick). The number of Ross's Geese reported in the state continues to increase, perhaps a direct reflection of the growth of the population as a whole. Increased observer vigilance may also be a factor. Observers are still cautioned to consider Ross's x Snow Goose hybrids in their identification and pay special attention to documenting the bill shape, size and detail.

Black Brant (*Branta bernicla nigricans*)

2001-24-A One, Jamaica Bay WR, Kings Co., 20 May, (Rex Stanford, Birgit Stanford). This adult Black Brant was initially discovered by Angus Wilson and Andy Guthrie on 19 May as it loafed with other Atlantic Brant (*Branta bernicla hrota*) on the spit at Terrapin Point near the refuge's West Pond. The bird was still present the next day when it was studied and photographed by Rex and Birgit Stanford who submitted an excellent report. The very dark upper and underparts, extensive necklace and large bulky physique all suggest this was an adult male - and support identification as a (Pacific) Black Brant, as opposed to a hybrid, intergrade, or other form of brant. The status of Black Brant in New York has been reviewed in Wilson and Guthrie (1999).

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

2001-5-A/F One male, Oswego Harbor, Oswego Co., 4 Feb to 6 Mar, (Bill Purcell, Barbara Herrgesell, Kurt Fox, Dana Rohleder, Mary Alice Koeneke, Tim Capone). This adult male was discovered by Jon Glase on 4 Feb 2001 and continued to 6 Mar. It frequented the inner section of Oswego Harbor along with Lesser and Greater scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Redhead and Common Goldeneye. The immaculate white flanks, solid dark mantle, absence of vermiculations,

purple gloss on the head, yellow iris and long crest hanging from rear of crown were fully consistent with an adult male Tufted Duck. Four excellent color photographs taken by Mary Alice Koeneke supplemented the details provided in the written descriptions.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*)

2001-72-A/B One, off Seatuck Creek, Eastport, Suffolk Co, 22-27 Dec, (Steve Biasetti, Douglas J. Futuyma). It frequented the relatively calm water of Moriches Bay and was seen by many local observers during its stay to 27 Dec and perhaps beyond. Quite remarkably, considering the date, it was in near-alternate plumage, making the identification as a Pacific rather than Common or Red-throated relatively straightforward. More complicated perhaps is separation from Arctic Loon, primarily a Palearctic species that has not been recorded in New York. The absence of a white flank patch at the waterline, very pale crown and nape and very thin bill indicated a Pacific Loon. The status of Pacific Loon in New York has recently been summarized in Dyer 2003.

White-faced Storm-Petrel (*Pelagodroma marina*)

2001-29-A One, pelagic 60 miles SSE of Shinnecock Inlet [coordinates 39° 28.919' - 72° 12.255' to 39° 29.138' - 72° 14.443'], 23 Sep, (Orhan Birol); 2001-54-A One, on Hudson Canyon, 4 Sep (Paul A. Guris). This was another banner year for White-faced Storm-Petrels off New York. Both reports were accompanied by convincing descriptions and the Hudson Canyon bird was supported by a video by Paul Guris (2001-54-A). This species breeds on remote islets in the eastern North Atlantic (principally the Azores and Cape Verde Islands) as well as in the southern oceans.

Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*)

2001-64-A/B One, Cayuga Lake, Ithaca, Tompkins Co., 19-20 Dec, (William Watson, Michael Anderson); 2001-71-A One immature, over Lake Ontario from Krull Park, Town of Newfane, Niagara Co., 3 Dec, (Brendan Klick). The Cayuga Lake gannet was well described and supported by clear photos by Peter Hosner. Brown Booby, the most plausible confusion species was clearly eliminated and other boobies were also discussed. Presumably this inexperienced first-year bird made its way down the St. Lawrence Seaway into Lake Ontario and then across land to the top of Cayuga Lake?

Great White Heron (*Ardea [herodias] occidentalis*)

2001-13-A One, Wolfe's Pond Park, Richmond Co., 2 Sep - 4 Nov, (Christopher Nuzzi); 2001-40-A One, Gilgo Beach, Town of Babylon, Suffolk Co., 8 - 23 Oct., (John Fritz). Since the 1950's the Great White Heron has been treated as a distinctive subspecies of the widespread Great Blue Heron rather than a full species in its own right. They occur most commonly in central and southern Florida as well as Cuba, the Isle of Pines, coastal Yucatan and Quintana Roo and in Venezuela (AOU 1998). After breeding, both adults and young disperse across the Florida peninsula and states bordering the Gulf of Mexico. Occasionally Great White Herons wander into the Northeast and there are two or three previous

reports for New York. An article by Shai Mitra and John Fritz reviews the previous records from New York and elsewhere (Mitra and Fritz 2002).

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)

2001-58-A One, west of Skaneateles Lake, Onondaga Co., 11 Dec (Margaret Rusk). This very late Cattle Egret was studied as it walked and flew behind some cattle in a pasture. Fortunately the cows were curious about the observer and came over to say hello, bringing the attendant egret closer. Identification of non-breeding egrets, such as this individual, is always more problematic, but the description was fully compatible with Cattle Egret and its association with cows clinched the identification! The egret was reported by Dr. Ben Burtt on the Onondaga Audubon Society Bird Box and had been present from 3 Dec.

Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*)

2001-28-A/I Maximum of 16 individuals, at the home of Jeff & Sue Dapolito and surrounding area, Clyde, Wayne Co., 15 Aug to 1 Sep, (Fay Sedore, Sandra Sharp, Kayo Roy, Charles Spagnoli, Mary Alice Koenek, Robert Spahn, Leona Lauster, Kurt Fox, William Watson). This was an unprecedented gathering of sixteen Wood Storks, all in their 2nd calendar year. Although details were not submitted to NYSARC, three Wood Storks were observed on Cranberry Pond near Braddock Bay on 28-29 Aug. This is 35 miles from Clyde and it is tempting to speculate that these were some of the same birds. When they departed at 9:30 AM on the 29th, the storks headed east. The reasons for the incursion are unknown but possibly relate to the extended drought in several southern states, although it is possible these could have come from as far away as Mexico. For more discussion see Sherony 2001.

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

2001-78-A One, Salmon River, Richland, Oswego Co., 28-29 Dec (Donald Coogan). This Osprey was seen fishing over a stretch of open water in the partly frozen Salmon River. Primarily a summer visitor, lingering individuals do occasionally occur in coastal areas but to find one in central NY at the end of December is most unusual.

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*)

2001-10-A One, Weaver Rd., West Sayville, Suffolk Co., 13 Mar, (Robert Edwards). This stunning raptor was first spotted by 12-year old Scott Edwards who quickly alerted his father Robert. It was perched in a maple tree and was being actively scolded by American Crows. As the Edwards family, together with their neighbors the Walsh family, studied the bird with binoculars, nine-year old Nick Walsh took some very useful photos, which were submitted with the report. These clearly show the bird's puffed up white breast and belly feathering and very long black forked tail and primary tips. The white head appeared tiny compared to the body and very long tail. Although Swallow-tailed Kites wander into the Northeast during the spring and summer, it's hard to explain the occurrence of a bird on Long Island so early in the season. The first reports from the Gulf Coast were around the same time, making this a rather unique record. This species

seems unlikely to be held in captivity and the committee considered the chances of an escape as low. More details on this sighting are given in Edwards (2001).

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*)

2001-45-A One, Sands Point Preserve, Nassau Co., 28 Oct, (Glenn Quinn). The observer studied this soaring hawk for 15 minutes and gave an excellent description consistent with that of a sub-adult Mississippi Kite. In the full fifteen minutes of observation, the bird was seen to flap its wings only once. This long, slim-winged hawk had banding on the tail consistent with the kite. Although soaring Peregrine Falcons have a similar shape, the plumage details and overall structure provided sufficient assurances that this was, indeed, a Mississippi Kite.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)

2001-37-A/B One, dark morph, Braddock Bay State Park, Monroe Co., 8 Apr (Michael Tetlow, Dominic Sherony); 2001-79-A One, dark morph, Derby Hill, Oswego Co., 8 Apr (Gerard Phillips). Although treated separately here, it seems possible that these two sightings of a dark-morph Swainson's Hawk relate to the same bird. The first (2001-37-A) passed over Braddock Bay near Rochester at 2:00 PM and the second (2001-79-A) over Derby Hill, some 80 miles to the east at 4:00 PM on the same afternoon. At Derby Hill, the observatory's first dark morph Swainson's was seen soaring in a kettle of twenty-five Turkey Vultures. Interestingly, more than 1,300 Turkey Vultures were recorded that day, an observatory record. Records of Swainson's Hawk are becoming increasingly frequent in New York and eastern North America as a whole (Dodge and Nicoletti, 1998; England et al. 1997). Whether the increase in reports is due to a range expansion, increased vigilance (such as more hawkwatches or improved knowledge on the part of field observers) is unclear.

Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*)

2001-21-A One, light morph, Palmer Rd., Gansevoort, Saratoga Co., 10 Jul, (Barbara Putnam). The Rough-legged Hawk was studied with binoculars for 10 minutes as it circled directly over the road then out over a field where it hovered briefly. Key points supporting the identification were the dark wrist patches, very dark belly and predominantly white tail with one large dark terminal band. Although familiar during the winter months, Rough-legged Hawks are very rare in NY during the summer, and reports during that season probably mostly relate to juvenile Red-tailed Hawks.

Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*)

2001-3-A/H One, Little Sodus Bay, Cayuga Co., 4 Feb through to 10 Mar, (Mary Alice Koeneke, Barbara Herrgesell, Bill Purcell, Charles C. Spagnoli, Tim Capone, Alison Van Keuren, Bernie Carr, Willie D'Anna). This immature Gyrfalcon was studied by a number of observers during the morning of its discovery as it perched in trees overlooking the partly frozen bay and then when the bird was out on the ice. The falcon tried to carry away a partly frozen waterfowl carcass that was embedded in the ice but was unsuccessful. Instead, it consumed a large part of it *in situ*. This large and powerful falcon even defended

the carcass from an immature Bald Eagle. Sketches from Mary Alice Koenke, Alison Van Keuren and Willie D'Anna and two rather distant color photographs by Mary Alice Koenke accompanied the written reports. The Gyrfalcon was resighted on a number of other occasions during the rest of the month to 10 Mar 2001.

Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*)

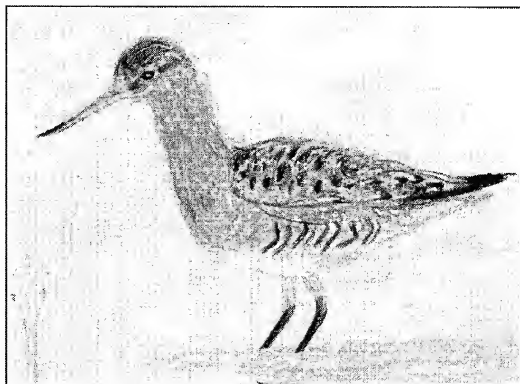
2001-27-A/C One, Sandy Pond, Town of Sandy Pond, Oswego Co., 10-11 Aug, (Barbara Herrgesell, Margaret Rusk, Bill Purcell). This Piping Plover was studied with five Semipalmated Plovers, providing a perfect opportunity to compare size and upper-part coloration. Interestingly, in 1984 a pair bred at this same locality and this was the last inland breeding record for the state. The inland breeding population of Piping Plover nests on beaches from eastern Alberta to the shores of Lake Ontario, and this species is designated as "Endangered". Because Piping Plovers occur more frequently on Lake Erie than Lake Ontario, it is generally assumed, but not proven, that these records involve birds from the inland rather than coastal population.

American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*)

2001-43-A One, Village pier in Piermont, Rockland Co., 7 Oct (Carol Weiss). This avocet was seen feeding with its characteristic side-to-side sweeping action on a patch of exposed mud along the shore of the Hudson River. It remained until 27 Oct and was seen by many observers.

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

2001-12-A/G One, breeding-plumaged male, Seatuck Creek, Eastport, Suffolk Co., 5-14 Apr, (Paul H. Gillen, Jr., Michael Higgiston, Jennifer Hanson, Arie Gilbert, Yolanda Garcia, Rex & Brigit Stanford, Willie D'Anna). While checking a small muddy creek that often holds migrant shorebirds, Paul H. Gillen Jr. happened upon a large and brightly colored shorebird, which he quickly identified as a near-alternate plumaged adult Black-tailed Godwit. He contacted Tony Lauro, who quickly spread the news through the local birding community and then rushed down to see the godwit himself, and confirm the identification. A major 'twitch' ensued, with hundreds of birders from all over the Northeast and beyond traveling to Eastport to enjoy this spectacular wader. Color photographs were quickly posted on the web. The seven reports we received provided



Black-tailed Godwit (2001-12 A/G)
Eastport, Suffolk Co.
Sketched by Yolanda Garcia

an excellent documentation of this wonderful bird. There are three subspecies of Black-tailed Godwit and these can often be distinguished in the field. In this case, the very strongly red rather than orange tones and boldly marked tertials fit the Icelandic breeding form (*islandica*) perfectly. The nominate form (*limosa*) which breeds primarily in continental Europe tends to be paler and lankier. The Siberian Black-tailed Godwit (*melanuiroides*) is similar to *islandica* in redness but has darker upper parts and is appreciably shorter legged. Many are also shorter billed. With the exception of occasional spring overshoots to western Alaska, Black-tailed Godwits have been recorded fewer than 50 times in North America. They are most frequent in the maritime provinces of Canada in the spring, and most likely represent Icelandic birds that have been displaced on their return from wintering grounds in the British Isles. Some birds seem to be disorientated and continue down the Atlantic seaboard and there are records from a number of eastern states including Florida and more recently, Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean. Whether the Eastport bird was a northbound migrant that had already spent the winter in the Americas or a very early migrant that had overshoot Iceland and traveled south remains an open question. This is the first record for New York. More information is provided in Gillen (2001).

Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*)

2001-16-A/C One, mouth of Great Chazy River, Town of Champlain, Clinton Co., 6-8 May, (Charles W. Mitchell, William Krueger, Judith & Roger Heintz). These carefully written and convincing reports described a Marbled Godwit that accompanied some Greater and Lesser yellowlegs in a pasture. The godwit was identified by virtue of its larger size, marbled upperparts, cinnamon axillaries and underwing coverts, and long bicolored and slightly upturned bill. In flight, the dark legs extended beyond the tail.

Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*)

2001-73-A One, Lake Champlain off Pt. au Roche, Clinton Co., 13 Jul, (David Hoag). The only jaeger species routinely found in the lower forty-eight states during summer is Pomarine and there has been at least one other summer record for this species in New York State. This light phase adult was seen in lumbering flight between New York and Vermont over Lake Champlain. The overall description clearly identified this bird as a jaeger. The flight style, physical size, and plumage characteristics were sufficient for the committee to accept the observer's conclusions that it was a Pomarine rather than a Parasitic or Long-tailed. Two other jaeger sightings, possibly Pomarines, were mentioned but not described in enough detail to be identified with confidence.

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)

2001-38-A One, Hamlin Beach State Park, Monroe Co., 29 Aug, (Dominic Shernoy); 2001-39-A One, seen from a ferry crossing Long Island Sound, Suffolk Co., 27 Aug, (Dennis Mildner); 2001-55-A One juvenile, on an organized pelagic, (Paul A. Guris). The sighting from Lake Ontario (2001-38-A) was made by two people for a very brief time as a fly-by. Long-tailed Jaegers are rarely

reported on Lake Ontario, but there have been more reports in recent years, mostly because observers are watching the lake earlier in the fall. This species usually occurs in late August. This bird's grayish head contrasting with the darker body was an important feature that weighed heavily with the committee's decision to accept this submission. The sighting on Long Island Sound (2001-39-A) was of an adult with the extended central tail feathers. Although this report was brief, the committee accepted it on the basis of the plumage description. The third report was very detailed. The pale gray head of this immature bird was a convincing field characteristic and the plumage of this bird was also well-described.

Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*)

2001-50-A Seven adults, Lock #7, Mohawk River, Schenectady Co., 28 Jul, (Robert P. Yunick). This group of seven adult Laughing Gulls was observed floating on the barge canal of the Mohawk River and in the company of Ring-billed Gulls. The well-defined black heads, dark mantle and black wing tips ruled out other possibilities. Laughing Gulls are uncommon away from the coast and this is a particularly impressive number of birds.

Black-tailed Gull (*Larus crassirostris*)

2001-2-A/B One, Jones Beach, Nassau Co., 1 Jan, (Thomas W. Burke, Douglas J. Futuyma). Scanning the marshes north of Jones Beach State Park, Tom Burke and Gail Benson spotted a small dark-mantled gull some distance (1/4 mile) across a marine channel. Suspecting it was a Black-tailed Gull on the basis of its relatively small size and long-winged appearance, the observers kept watch on the bird, which came closer (500 ft) as it fed in the channel. The description provided critical details needed to secure the identification, such as the sharply defined subterminal tail band and the strong white trailing edge of the secondaries and inner primaries. Unfortunately the fading afternoon light hampered efforts to determine bill and leg color. Important alternatives (Lesser Black-backed, Laughing, Olrog's and Band-tailed) were discussed and can be ruled out. Interestingly, another group of birders reported a Black-tailed Gull - most likely the same individual - from nearby Point Lookout but failed to submit a report. This is the second record for NY State.

California Gull (*Larus californicus*)

2001-65-A/B One, basic, Robert Moses Power Plant, Niagara River, Niagara Co., 11 Nov, 1,2,8,9 Dec, (Willie D'Anna). Adult California Gulls are now being seen annually on the Niagara River. The two reports received discuss one adult seen on several dates and two adults seen on 2 Dec. The descriptions provided discussed the size, mantle color, bill markings, leg color, iris color, and wing pattern and leave little doubt about the identification.

Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*)

2001-66-A/B Two, Montauk Point, Suffolk Co., 4-11 Feb, (Andrew Guthrie, Angus Wilson). Discovered by Bob Kurtz, these murrelets were seen on the ocean by many observers to the west or south of the lighthouse. The detailed

descriptions carefully ruled out the most likely confusion species, Common Murre and Razorbill, and hit on all the key points, notably the diagnostic pale tomium stripe, stout bill shape, and shape of divide between dark neck and white breast.

Long-billed Murrelet (*Brachyramphus perdix*)

2001-56-A/D One, south end of Cayuga Lake, Ithaca, Tompkins Co., 17-18 Dec, (Kevin & Jay McGowan, Kurt Fox, Curtis Marantz, Matthew J. Williams). Steve and Taylor Kelling discovered a small alcid on 17 Dec 2001. Suspecting they had found a murrelet, the Kellings promptly alerted the local birding community, but it was not until noon that the murrelet was refound and, only then, seen well enough to be positively identified as a Long-billed. The bird remained until 20 Dec and was seen by many local and visiting birders during its stay. The observers listed above are to be commended for providing a particularly detailed set of written descriptions, supported by equally informative digiscoped images taken by Jay and Kevin McGowan under less than ideal conditions. For a detailed account by the discoverers see Kelling and Kelling (2002). Until recently, the AOU lumped Long-billed and Marbled as a single species. Good arguments were made to split the two on the basis of phylogenetic, evolutionary and biological criteria (Patten 1997; Friesen et al. 1996). The pattern of the head and neck provides the best clue that the Cayuga Lake bird was a Long-billed Murrelet. The dark feathering follows a continuous line from the bill through the eye and down the neck. The corresponding line on a Marbled Murrelet would be expected to bulge backward on the side of the neck and forward on the side of the breast. The longish bill and white eye-arcs, which are clearly evident in the photographs, also support the identification. For discussion of the identification and vagrancy of Long-billed and Marbled murrelets see the excellent article by Steven Mlodinow (1997). There are about 50 North American records, and this is the 2nd for New York.

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*)

2001-23-A/B One, East Lake Rd., Oswego, Oswego Co., 9 May, (David Cowell, Gerard Phillips); 2001-68-A One, at feeder in Cedarhurst, Nassau Co., 13 Oct, (Cindy Wodinsky). The dove on 9 May (2001-23-A/B) was described well by voice and plumage. It was found during the late evening at Region 5's lamented Niagara Mohawk Energy Information Center. This migrant hot spot was noted locally for superb fall outs of passerines, but is now off limits to the public. The dove, last of a growing list of rarities recorded at this location, was not relocated the following day. For more details of the Nassau Co. dove (2001-68-A) see Wodinsky (2002).

Northern Hawk Owl (*Surnia ulula*)

2001-4-A/E One, Bloomingdale Bog, Franklin Co., 1-27 Jan, (Kurt Fox, Alison Van Keuren, Jay McGowan, Willie D'Anna, Angus Wilson); 2001-17-A/C One, Plattsburg, Clinton Co., 21Jan.-3 Mar, (Judith & Roger Heintz, Nancy Olsen, Charles W. Mitchell). The winter of 2000-2001 was a good one for birders seeking this enigmatic visitor from the north. Both Northern Hawk Owls were discovered

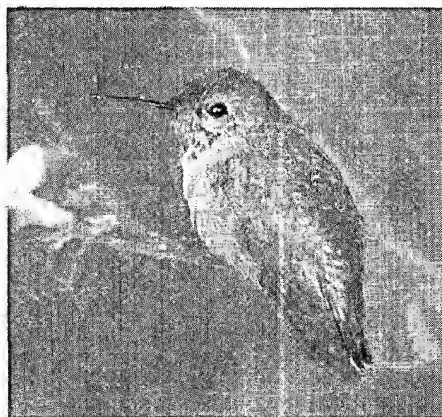
within a two week period (30 Dec for the Franklin Co. bird and 13 Jan for the Clinton Co. bird) and perhaps encouraged by handouts in the form of domestic mice, remained for several weeks. The Bloomingdale Bog bird (2001-4-A/E) was especially cooperative, frequenting an abandoned but accessible railway grade and was enjoyed by many visiting birders during its month long stay.

Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus*)

2001-22-A/D One, Tifft Nature Preserve, Buffalo, Erie Co., 5-6 May, (Robert Andrle, Willie D'Anna, William Watson, Brendan Klick); 2001-33-A/C One, Manitou Rd., Town of Greece, Monroe Co., 27 Mar, (Robert Spahn, Carolyn Cass, Kurt Fox). The Erie Co. owl was found by Robert Andrle and immediately shown to Brendan Klick who happened to be leading a field trip to the preserve. After some study, the bird was identified as a Boreal Owl rather than a Saw-whet. Clearly identifiable color photos submitted by Robert Andrle and Doug Happ supplemented these well-written and convincing reports. Many birders also saw the Monroe Co. owl. Although no photographs were submitted, the detailed reports described its larger size compared to a nearby Saw-whet Owl, the broken border to the facial disk, presence of white speckles on forehead and the pale bill.

Calliope Hummingbird (*Stellula calliope*)

2001-49-A/E Two individuals, Fort Tryon Park, Manhattan, New York Co., 2-8 Dec (Douglas J. Futuyma, Arie Gilbert, Sean Sime, Paul Lehman, Jennifer Hanson). Two hummingbirds frequenting the late-blooming *Salvia* at Fort Tryon in upper Manhattan from at least 21 Nov were looked at more critically on the afternoon of 1 Dec and found not to be Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. As a result, several birders gathered at the site on 2 Dec, were treated to wonderful views of the hummingbirds, and determined that they were two Calliope Hummingbirds, both immature males. One or both hummingbirds continued to frequent the gardens, to the delight of many visiting birders, up to 25 Dec, with the last sighting of one apparently on 27 Dec. Excellent photos by Sean Sime and video by Paul Lehman accompanied these reports, as did sketches by Douglas Futuyma and Jennifer Hanson. Among the key points of identification for these two small, compact hummingbirds were the wings extending somewhat beyond the tail at rest, and a notable rufous tinge along the flanks and some rufous at the base of the tail feathers, though in neither case was the rufous as extensive or intense as on a Rufous/Allen's *Selasphorus* hummingbird. One of these males was also distinguished by one exceptionally long gorget feather of

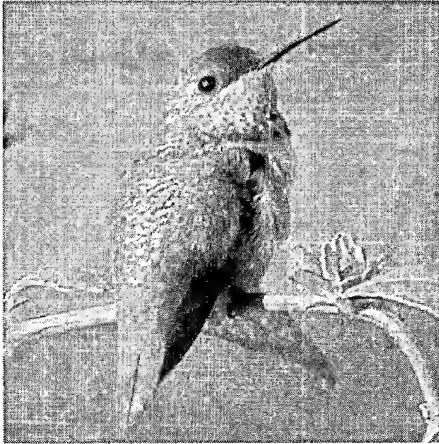


Calliope Hummingbird (2001-49-A/E)
Fort Tryon Park, Manhattan, New York Co.
©Sean Sime

the type displayed by adult males, which at certain angles showed the purplish-red color shown by Calliopes. This is a first record for New York State, and more detail appears in Mitra and Bochnik (2001).

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*)

2001-67-A/B One, Lenoir Nature Preserve, Westchester Co., 17 Nov to 5 Jan 2002, (Michael Bochnik, Kevin & Jay McGowan). This long staying and very well-studied *Selasphorus* hummingbird frequented the late-blooming *Lobelia* flowers of the butterfly garden at Lenoir Nature Preserve. After an absence over New Year, what is presumed to be the same bird made a brief re-appearance at a nearby feeder. The central issue is separation of Rufous Hummingbird from the



Rufous Hummingbird (2001-67-A/B)
Lenoir Preserve, Westchester Co.
©Kevin & Jay McGowan

very similar Allen's. Both reports provided multiple photographs, some of which are of outstanding quality. The scattering of iridescent feathers on the throat and mixture of rufous and green feathering on the back suggest this was a first-fall male. Photographs provided with both reports managed to show the spread tail including the critical rectrix 5. To facilitate the review, the McGowan report included a very useful set of reference photos showing spread tails of specimens of both species. The difference in the width of R5 is very evident in the specimens, and it is clear from this comparison that the Yonkers bird was an excellent match to the Rufous specimens.

Lewis's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*)

2001-15-A/B One, adult, Fort Drum Military Base, Jefferson Co., 1-2 May, (Nick Leone, Jeffrey S. Bolsinger). The Lewis's Woodpecker was discovered during an organized survey of Red-headed Woodpeckers on the Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield at Fort Drum. It perched at the top of a tree in a small open area. Typical for this western species, it performed numerous towering flights to catch insects, but was also seen gleaning insects from dead wood in more traditional fashion. The bird was seen by a number of local birders during the day as well as the following morning but sadly not located thereafter. These excellent reports provided detailed descriptions of the plumage including the pink belly; wedge-shaped tail, gray upper breast, and crow-like appearance in flight. This is the fourth record for New York State.

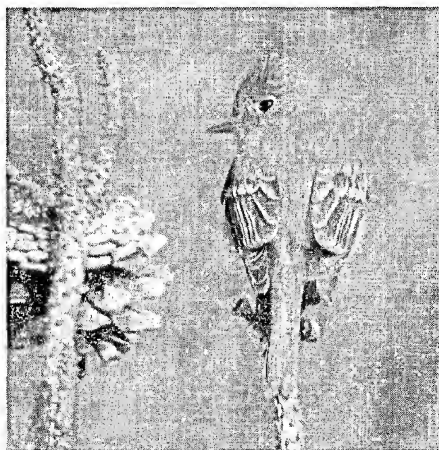
Black-backed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*)

2001-69-A One, at a feeder in Plymouth Reservoir, Chenango Co., last week Aug for 3-4 days., (Francis Hailey). Black-backed Woodpeckers are known to wander more during the winter in search of better food sources though they are rarely

recorded. It is therefore not altogether surprising that one might show up somewhere in the state outside of the Adirondacks. This bird was seen for several days and observed for extended periods on each encounter. The black back and barred flanks as well as size were described.

Hammond's Flycatcher
(*Empidonax hammondi*)

2001-44-A/C One, Jones Beach State Park, Nassau Co., 26 & 27 Nov, (John Fritz, Douglas J. Futuyma, Angus Wilson). Identification of *Empidonax* flycatchers in the fall is notoriously difficult and should always be approached with caution. Within hours of the sightings on the second day, photographs were posted on the web and elicited expert commentary from observers intimately familiar with Western, Least, Hammond's and Dusky flycatchers. Field observations and photographs confirmed that the lower mandible was pale, consistent with a first-year rather than adult. The small size and prominent eye-ring



Hammond's Flycatcher (2001-44-A/C)
Jones Beach State Park, Nassau Co.
©Angus Wilson

ruled out Acadian and Willow/Alder. The shape of the eye ring was not correct for Western Flycatcher and the throat lacked the appropriate yellow wash. Least Flycatcher presented a significant concern but the long primary projection and smaller, straight-edged bill argued against this. Lastly the plumage appeared freshly molted, consistent with pre-migration molt of Hammond's Flycatcher (Pyle 1997). There was precedent for vagrancy of this species into the Northeast and this is a classic time of year for western vagrants. This is the first record for New York State, and is described more fully in Fritz and Futuyma (2002).

Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*)

2001-77-A One, Democrat Point, Fire Island, Suffolk Co., 25 - 26 May, (Shaibal S. Mitra, Patricia Lindsay). This rare but regular straggler was well-observed flying and perched at Democrat Point near Fire Island Inlet. Most sightings of this species are in fall; Bull's Birds of NYS (Levine 1998) lists six spring sightings. The bird was seen well and other *Tyrannus* kingbirds were eliminated by structural and plumage characteristics. Several people again observed this bird the following day

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)

2001-34-A/C One, Stillwater Rd., Town of Carlton, Orleans Co., 19 May, (Robert Spahn, Willie D'Anna, Michael Morgante). This Loggerhead Shrike was documented by a set of excellent reports, which clearly ruled out the more regular Northern Shrike. The critical identification points were the relatively wide mask

that fully surrounded the eye, little if any white between upper border of mask and gray cap, and a comparatively stubby black bill. These experienced observers also considered the upperparts darker gray than expected for Northern Shrike. Sadly, the Loggerhead Shrike continues to decline in the Northeast and, although once a breeding species, has become quite rare in New York.

Gray Jay (*Perisoreus canadensis*)

2001-75-A One, near Pane Lake, Antwerp, Jefferson Co., 18 & 21 Nov, (Nick Leone). This report provided a good description of an adult or perhaps first-winter Gray Jay. Although the location is not too far from the boreal forests of the Adirondacks, it is not inconceivable that this bird wandered down from the core range in Canada.

Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*)

2001-47-A/D One, Jones Beach State Park, Nassau Co., 11 Nov, (Diana Teta, Steven D'Amato, Seymour Schiff, Kevin O'Leary); 2001-60-A/C Two individuals, Round Pond, Town of Greece, Monroe Co., 8-9 Oct. (Kurt Fox, Jeanne Skelly, Dominic Sherony). The reports, drawings and descriptions of both sightings provided strong support for the identifications and carefully eliminated Cliff Swallow, the most likely confusion species. The two individuals in the Town of Greece (2001-60-A/B/C) were found on Round Pond, just south of Lake Ontario, by David Tetlow, and were seen by numerous observers, with one bird remaining for a second day. The bird at Jones Beach West End (2001-47-A/D) was only seen for a few passes over a period of a couple of hours. The overall descriptions did not allow separation by race (a more difficult endeavor than most field guides let on), but left no doubt about the species identification.

Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

2001-42-A One, Smith Point County Park, Suffolk Co., 17 Sep, (Daniel Stoebel). Paul Maldonado originally reported this Northern Wheatear at Smith Point County Park on 16 Sep, and it was relocated and studied by Daniel Stoebel the following day. A particularly cooperative bird, the wheatear provided nice views while remaining in the area at least until 22 Sep, during which time it was seen and photographed by many additional birders. The details of the plumage were well described. According to Bull's Birds of New York State (Levine 1998), sixty-five percent of all Northern Wheatear sightings from NYS occur in the month of September.

Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*)

2001-57-A/H Bond Lake County Park, Lewiston, Niagara Co., 23 Dec to 18 Jan 2002, (Willie D'Anna, Michael Morgante, Gerry Rising, Kurt Fox, Curtis Marantz, Brendan Klick, Kevin McGann). Dave Muller found the bird on 5 Dec, but it was five days before he could firmly identify it as a Townsend's Solitaire. After an interval of almost three weeks, Willie D'Anna relocated the solitaire on 23 Dec and it remained until 23 Feb 2002. Key features supporting the identification were the bold white eye- ring, pale buff patch at base of primaries, thin white wing bar on the greater coverts and the white outer tail feathers most

evident in flight. During its protracted stay, the solitaire was often observed perched on the tops of trees and fruiting bushes and was seen eating grapes and berries. On some occasions it was heard singing, suggesting it might have been a male. Convincing color photographs contributed by Willie D'Anna and Kevin McGann supported the well-prepared descriptions.

Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*)

2001-59-A One, Montgomery, Orange Co., 13 Dec, (John Tramontano). Wood Thrushes are Neotropical migrants wintering outside North America and reports for the late fall and winter warrant review. This thrush was observed on two occasions, once with a Hermit Thrush, offering useful comparison. The superficially similar Brown Thrasher can be ruled out on several counts and the more exotic possibility of a Fieldfare, something to be considered in winter, could be eliminated by the color of the head.

Bohemian Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*)

2001-41-A One, Hamlin Beach State Park, Monroe Co., 22 Sep, (Robert Spahn). This Bohemian Waxwing was heard, then seen flying over the observers with several Cedar Waxwings. This is a very early date for this uncommon winter visitor.

Tennessee Warbler (*Vermivora peregrina*)

2001-62-A One, Park Station, Chemung Co., 2 Dec, (David Russell). The combination of grayish cap, whitish underparts and white supercilium supported the identification of this warbler as an adult Tennessee rather than Orange-crowned Warbler. There are very few winter records for NY.

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*)

2001-26-A One male, Central Park, New York Co., 20 Jun, (Todd Olson). First heard singing and then studied with binoculars. The detailed description was consistent with an adult male. The late-spring/early-summer date is unexpected and suggests a bird that might have wintered in the southeast.

Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*)

2001-18-A One, Miner Rd, Town of Scriba, Oswego Co., 14 Apr, (Mary Alice Koeneke). Five excellent color photographs nicely complemented the observer's written description. The distinctive head pattern, discrete breast spot and white outer edges to the tail including 'tear drop' marks at the tip firmly ruled out other sparrows and larks. The rich chestnut on the head and lack of streaking indicates adult plumage, which is to be expected in spring.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Ammodramus nelsoni*)

2001-52-A/D Two, Cayuga Pool, Iroquois NWR, Genesee Co., 8-10 Oct, (Willie D'Anna, Kurt Fox, William Watson, Brendan Klick). An excellent set of reports in which at least 2 (possibly 4) adults studied in great detail. Enough details were provided in the descriptions to firmly eliminate *subvirgatus*, which is duller with less prominent white stripes on back but not to separate nominate *nelsoni* from

alterus. The observers took care to set out the key points of separation from Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow, specifically the less-defined streaks extending along the flanks and the comparatively smaller bill.

Chestnut-collared Longspur (*Calcarius ornatus*)

2001-1-A/B One, Jones Beach State Park, Nassau Co., 5 Jan, (Thomas W. Burke, John Fritz); 2001-7-A/B One, Jones Beach State Park, Nassau Co., 18 & 20 Feb, (Alvin Wollin, Seymour Schiff). The first (2001-1-A/B) of these two sighting was made under difficult conditions just before dusk. Initially there was some uncertainty and the identification was only clinched by careful review of the literature and museum specimens. After a significant interlude a similar bird (2001-7-A/B) was seen with Lapland Longspurs near the site of the first sighting. It seems likely but is not proven that these two reports refer to the same bird. These reports constitute the sixth, and possibly seventh, record for New York.

2001 Reports Accepted but Origins Uncertain

Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolus*)

2001-32-A One, Town of Somerset, Niagara Co., 15 Jul, (William Watson). Although the detailed description was good for a Gyr Falcon, the extraordinary date rang alarm bells within the committee. This concern turned out to be warranted when Willie D'Anna reported in a follow-up message that analysis of his video of the bird revealed a small non-Fish & Wildlife Service band on one leg. From this, the committee concluded that this was most likely an escaped falconry bird. In recent years, at least one captive Gyr Falcon has been reported lost in the state, however, there is no reason to assume this highly mobile species could not wander in from elsewhere.

2000 Reports Accepted

Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*)

2000-9-A One, Biddellcum Pond, Town of Schroepfel, Oswego Co., 11 Mar, (Bill Purcell). This report went for three rounds of review due in large part to the wording of the relative size comparisons, which implied that the bird was on the large side for a pure Ross's. In addition, there was no description of the shape of line of demarcation between the base of the bill and the face. Both factors justifiably prompted concern whether the bird could perhaps have been a Ross's x Snow Goose hybrid. Given the now regular occurrence of pure Ross's in the state and very few reports of hybrids, it was felt in the end that the identification was more than likely correct.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

2000-4-B One male, St. Lawrence River, Jefferson Co., 26 Feb, (Charles Spagnoli). This was a late report of a bird that was previously accepted by the Committee. The Tufted Duck was discovered and photographed by Nick Leone on 29 Jan, 2000. The current report established that this was likely the same bird and extended the dates of occurrence to 26 Feb.

Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*)

2000-76-A 30+ birds, Fishkill, Dutchess Co., 31 Dec, (Edmond Spaeth). The unusually warm December may have been a factor in the late occurrence of this extraordinary flock. Though there has since been a January sighting in Chautauqua County (Morgante 2002), the Fishkill birds unquestionably involve a record number of Sandhill Cranes in New York.

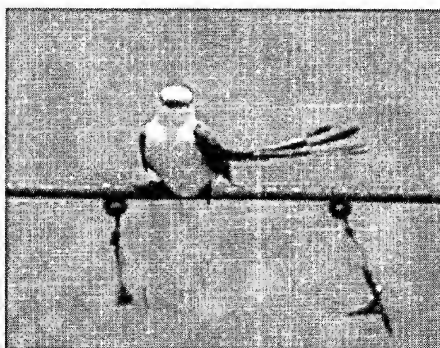
Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)

2000-83-A One adult, Democrat Point, Suffolk Co., 14 Jun, (Shaibal S. Mitra). Although this report was written well after the fact, field notes from the day of observation were convincing. The Long-tailed was accompanied by an adult dark morph Parasitic Jaeger. The paler grayer mantle with contrasting darker flight feathers, neat black cap, and absence of a dark breast-band on the Long-tailed, as well as smaller size, were all observed.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

(*Tyrannus forficatus*)

2000-82-A/B One adult, Conesus, Livingston Co., 2 Aug, (Mark Deprez, Kurt Fox). Mark Deprez first discovered this flycatcher and also submitted color photographs. The bird was actually identified later by Jim Kimball. Kurt Fox forwarded additional photographs to the committee. The images clearly show an adult Scissor-tailed Flycatcher as indicated by the red-pink underwing and flanks. Unfortunately, no other details of the sighting were provided.



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (2000-82-A/B)
near Conesus, Livingston Co.
©Mark Deprez

1999 Reports Accepted

Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla arenacea*)

1999-78-A One, Tobay Beach, Nassau Co., 24 Oct, (Shaibal S. Mitra, Patricia Lindsay). These reports from two experienced observers described a Field Sparrow that showed characters of the subspecies *arenacea*, the race that breeds in the Great Plains. The bird appeared pale overall, especially on the underparts, with a uniformly gray face lacking discernable rusty patterning on the cheeks. The crown appeared unstreaked and less rusty than on typical eastern birds (*S. p. pusilla*) at this time of year. Unfortunately, the literature on field identification of the two Field Sparrow subspecies is limited. Byers et al. (1995), Rising (1996) and Beadle and Rising (2001) mention that in *arenacea* the wings and tail are longer and the plumage is grayer, lacking much of the rusty tones seen in typical *pusilla*. These sources also mention intergradation between the two forms, but provide little detailed information regarding the abruptness of the boundary zone. As the observers acknowledge, David Sibley in his field guide (Sibley 2000)

makes the unqualified statement that gray birds occur in *pusilla* (i.e. east of where the two forms are known to intergrade in Oklahoma). Given the uncertainties in the true extent of plumage variation within eastern populations, one committee member expressed general concerns regarding the ability to distinguish variability within *pusilla* from a true *arenacea* without the benefit of measurements. However, the committee in general felt that the details provided were sufficient to document the first occurrence of the subspecies *arenacea* in New York. The observers are to be commended for bringing the occurrence of this poorly known subspecies to public attention and the committee looks forward to additional reports of possible *arenacea*, preferably with supportive measurements and/or photographs.

1998 Reports Accepted

Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*)

1998-90-A One, Fire Island Lighthouse, Suffolk Co., 19 Jun, (Shaibal S. Mitra). Other *Tyrannus* were satisfactory excluded. A total of 16 sightings of Western Kingbirds were reported in the east during May and June of 1998, indicating an unprecedented seasonal incursion.

Hoary Redpoll (*Carduelis hornemanni*)

1998-89-A Four individuals, Bethel Corners, Oswego Co., 22 Jan - 10 Feb, (Gerard Phillips). This excellent report documents at least four *exilipes* Hoary Redpolls that were studied in the company of 300 or more Common Redpolls. The written details were accompanied by color photographs, which supported the identification, showing the barely streaked undertail coverts and general frosty looking appearance, along with other appropriate field marks

1995 Reports Accepted

Le Conte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*)

1995-53-A/B One, Zach's Bay, Jones Beach, Nassau Co., 15 Nov, (David Klauber, Howard Boltson). These belated reports describe a migrant sparrow studied at close range in late fall together with a Grasshopper Sparrow. The observers noted the bright orange face, gray/brown ear patch, white stripe extending through the middle of the otherwise black crown, unique pinkish nape striping, and presence of distinct streaks on the flanks. In addition the tips of the tail feathers differed in shape from those of the accompanying Grasshopper Sparrow. These details are consistent with a LeConte's Sparrow and rule out other possibilities including the sharp-tailed sparrows.

1983 Reports Accepted

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*)

1983-41-A One, Montauk Point, Suffolk Co., 9 Dec, (Paul H. Gillen, Jr.). This submission came in response to a call for records from any year. The description was a good fit for a first-winter male. The bird was bright yellowish with a hint of red feathering at the base of the bill. Although the color of the wings was not

discussed, they showed two obvious wing bars. Despite some missing details, the committee felt the report provided enough to firmly identify this distinctive species. Furthermore, the time of year and location would not be inappropriate for this western vagrant.

Reports Not Accepted

A number of factors may contribute to a record being denied acceptance. By far the most common is that the material submitted was considered insufficient or too vague to properly document the occurrence and/or eliminate similar species. For example, written documentation or descriptions prepared entirely from memory (sometimes weeks, months, or years) after a sighting are seldom voted on favorably and the Committee cannot overstate the importance of taking field notes of uncommon or rare birds. These notes should be taken while the bird is under study or, if this is not possible, immediately afterwards. It is very helpful to include a photocopy of your notes with the formal typed or neatly written report. This helps the committee to know what was seen at the time of the observation, before field guides or other sources of information were consulted. If you feel your handwriting is illegible, especially with the excitement of finding a good bird, it is a good idea to add a key that explains or decodes your notes. Crude field sketches are often very useful in illustrating what you saw and should always be submitted as part of the report, even if they are drawn on a napkin!

Advice on report preparation is available on our web site (see above), and in several published articles. We recommend the article by Willie D'Anna (2003), as well as the benchmark article by Dittman and Lasley (1992). The key elements to a good report are (i) the description of the bird with as much detail as possible, (ii) the names and contact details of the observers, (iii) location and date of the sighting and lastly (iv) an explanation of how the identification was made. This last category is frequently omitted but is extremely important. Ask yourself the following questions: What features led you to this conclusion as to the species involved? What other species might this bird be confused with and how were these possibilities ruled out? By providing this information, you invariably build upon the basic description and present a much more compelling case. By necessity, the preparation of a good report takes time and effort. It is not enough to scribble a few disjointed lines of description and leave it at that. Once the description of what you saw has gone down on paper, it is a good idea to consult reference books, audiotapes and so on. From the details you recorded, can you determine the age and sex of the bird? Are there identifiable subspecies that might tell us where the bird came from? What similar species are there and how can these be ruled out from the details you recorded? The latter it is especially important. Sometimes it is worth considering and discussing exotic possibilities. Escaped waterfowl, birds of prey, parrots and finches are relatively common and can resemble North American species.

All records, whether accepted or not, remain on file and can be re-submitted to the Committee if additional substantive material is presented. In such cases, please contact the Secretary at the address given above.

2001 Reports Not Accepted

Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*)

2001-48-A Two adults with two immatures, Fair Haven, Cayuga Co., 12 Nov, It was decided that one had to read too much between the lines in order accept this report. The report included a brave but eccentrically stylized sketch, depicting detail of the bill where it meets the forehead. Unfortunately, this outline did not match any particular swan species. No attempt was made to describe the two immature birds.

Band-rumped Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma castro*)

2001-20-A Two birds, Bottcher Farms, Big Flats, Chemung Co., 7 Mar, This was a particularly puzzling record for the Committee. The observer described two birds flying rapidly in side-by-side formation over an area of farmland. The brief account described them as black 'petrel shaped' birds with a 'white-banded rump and shallow forked tail'. Given the unusual circumstances and brevity of the report, the Committee was not even convinced these were identifiable as storm-petrels, let alone as a particular species.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)

2001-9-A One, light morph adult, along Rt 34B, Tompkins Co., 11 Mar, The bird was seen briefly from a passing car with the naked eye. The identification was primarily based on jizz and one or two suggestive field marks. However, given the brevity of details, the Committee felt there was reasonable doubt as to whether the bird was seen long or well enough to conclusively eliminate other raptor species.

Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

2001-19-A One, Derby Hill Hawkwatch, Oswego Co., 15 May, It was believed that this sighting pertained to a Eurasian Collared-Dove. Certain plumage details initially prompted concern whether Ringed Turtle-Dove was sufficiently ruled out. However, a solid description of the vocalization was included which helped resolve this issue. In the end, it was decided that for a first state record, seen only by a single observer, photographic evidence was needed. Furthermore, the legs had not been seen and therefore were not checked for bands. Although feral origin was perhaps unlikely in this case, the omission was nonetheless influential in the final decision not to accept this potential first state record.

American Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides dorsalis*)

2001-70-A One, at a feeder in Garden City, Nassau Co., 19 Dec. This brief report described a bird that had black bars on the front, white stripes on the black wings, and a yellow mark on the head. The shape of the bird was not described nor the type of feeder. Thus the committee could not even be certain that this was a woodpecker. What was also needed was some discussion as to why this was not a Black-backed Woodpecker. Either species would be an excellent sighting that far outside the Adirondacks.

shrike, sp. (*Lanius* sp.)

2001-63-A Two birds, Long Lake, Hamilton Co., 21 Jul, This was an intriguing report. Two shrikes of any species seen together in mid-summer would be highly significant since it would suggest nesting. Northern Shrike has never been recorded breeding in NY, and Loggerhead Shrike has long vanished as a nesting species. The description was not particularly detailed and provided no discussion of the identification. In particular, no mention was made of a hooked bill, the hallmark of a shrike, and in this context it is essential that the observer rule out (or even mention) such potentially confusing species as Northern Mockingbird and Gray Jay.

Virginia's Warbler (*Vermivora virginiae*)

2001-31-A/B One, Prospect Park, Brooklyn, Kings Co., 6 Sep. This small Nashville-like warbler was studied rather briefly as it foraged actively in the leaves of a maple tree as part of a moving flock of migrant passerines that included Nashville Warbler. The upperparts of the bird in question were described as ash or light gray and the underparts as off-white with a pale yellow spot (or patch) at the center of the breast. Other notable features included a bold white eye-ring, 'smoky gray' wings, an absence of color at the bases of underwings and a rounded head shape. Unfortunately, the tail, rump and undertail coverts were not seen during this brief encounter and no vocalizations were heard. The primary observer (2001-31-A) provided a candid report, making it clear what was not seen as well as what was. The observer also took pains to express caution regarding several aspects of the sighting, for example, taking into account the shading effect of leaves. A color sketch prepared a few days later supplemented the description, and the extensive discussion of the identification reviewed a host of alternative possibilities, from outside candidates such as gnatcatchers and Colima Warbler to more relevant possibilities such as a dull Nashville Warbler or Northern Parula. The western *ridgwayi* subspecies of Nashville Warbler was considered and judged by the observers to be excluded. This form is generally grayer than its eastern counterpart and closely resembles Virginia's Warbler. The second report (2001-31-B) provided confirmatory details but offered a less overt case for the specific identification. After careful reflection the committee felt that this sighting was simply too brief for a first state record of a relatively cryptic species, noting that several key features were not seen and the bird was not photographically documented or captured.

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*)

2001-30-A One male, Poughkeepsie, Dutchess Co., 31 Jul, A frequent spring overshoot into New York State, this species occurs annually in small numbers on Long Island and the NYC metropolitan area but is decidedly less common elsewhere. Although this red bird lacked the peaked crown of a Northern Cardinal, its occurrence at a feeder in mid-summer raised alarm bells for the committee. Some members felt that more detail was needed to rule out a Cardinal molting its crown feathers. The report failed to pass in the second round of review.

Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*)

2001-14-A/B One, Tanner Springs area, Central Park, New York Co., 22 Apr. On 22 Apr two New York City birders discovered a heavily spotted towhee near Tanner Springs in Central Park. They alerted other birders who not only managed to see it, but also obtained some excellent photographs. Regrettably the bird vanished shortly after and was never relocated. The strong white spotting on the upperparts suggested a Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*), most likely the widespread and partly migratory subspecies *arcticus*. However, the bird also displayed an extensive area of white at the base of the primaries, a feature normally attributed to Eastern Towhee (*P. erythrophthalmus*). Details of this fascinating sighting were submitted in the form of a published article that appeared in the *Kingbird* (2001-14-B, Stubblefield and Rising 2002) and a more conventional but brief report to NYSARC (2001-14-A) from two additional observers. The record underwent two rounds of review and elicited substantial discussion among the voting members. The committee appreciated the substantial original research that went into the analysis of this problematic bird. Ultimately the decision hinged on the question of ancestry and the frequency with which Spotted Towhees show obvious white bases to the primaries. As the authors of the article openly admit, this individual differs obviously from the great majority of *arcticus* specimens they examined. Even so, they document moderate to extensive white primary patches on no fewer than 8 specimens of *arcticus* collected far to the west of the contact zone (Fort Union, Montana and Walsh, Alberta). The Committee was divided in its interpretation of these and other Spotted Towhee specimens showing white primary patches. Noting the generally low frequency of such patches among Spotted Towhees, and the generally smaller size of these patches (compared to the Central Park bird), the committee agreed this was indeed not simply an 'odd' Eastern Towhee, but in the end, decided that the possibility of a hybrid origin could not be fully excluded.

Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*)

2001-35-A One adult male, Manitou Rd., Town of Greece, Monroe Co., 1 Apr. The committee did not accept this record because the description would not allow complete separation with immature male Baltimore Orioles. The color of the supercilium and details of the face, bib, and back were inadequate to give a clear indication of the species. The bird was viewed from a long distance with minimal study time and it is not surprising that the observer had left some unanswered questions.

2000 Reports Not Accepted

Canada Goose (*B. c. minima*)

2000-41-A One, possibly two, Point au Roche State Park beach, Clinton Co., 12 Oct. Committee members cited the complexity of Canada Goose taxonomy and the lack of prior documented occurrences of this form in the East as reasons for turning it down. The photographs provided show a very small Canada Goose among Snow Geese. The committee disagreed whether this was sufficient to identify the bird as this form and voted to not accept it in the third round.

albatross, sp.

2000-28-A One, 18 miles off shore from Fire Island, 18 Jun. This was a distant view of a seabird without the aid of any optics. The size and field marks do not eliminate Northern Gannet, a pelagic bird much more common in these waters. Although the observer did describe the flight characteristics, the lack of plumage details did not allow the committee to have a high degree of certainty concerning a possible albatross.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Ammodramus nelsoni*)

2000-17-A One, Niagara Mohawk Visitors Center, Town of Scriba, 4 May, Oswego Co. Observed by multiple observers on 4 May and apparently also on 6 May, this report was the only one received. Several factors combined to work against acceptance of this report. The date is exceptionally early for this species since inland spring migrants usually occur in late May or early June. Second, a Grasshopper Sparrow was reported at the same location around the same time. Although the committee felt that the description was perhaps more consistent with a Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, in light of the above, the fact that Grasshopper Sparrow was not considered in the report was an important reason why it was not accepted.

Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)

2000-70-A One at a feeder, Fredonia, Chautauqua Co., 10 & 25 Dec. This candid report by an experienced observer included a carefully made colored pencil drawing. The bird was apparently in active molt and was more advanced in plumage on the second date. The observer quickly narrowed the choices down to a Rusty or Brewer's Blackbird on the first date and, noting the dark eyes on the second date, identified it as a female Brewer's. In essence this report was not accepted after three rounds because the committee felt that it might have been a Brown-headed Cowbird. The sketch showed a buff-cream throat unlike any known plumage of Brewer's Blackbird and the back was described as black with no mention of gray or brown tones. Molt weighed heavily in our decision since Brewer's Blackbirds are known to molt before their fall migration and so would not be expected to be actively molting in the state. Much of the sketch and description was consistent with a male Brown-headed Cowbird in post-juvenal molt. Although this report was not accepted in the end, the refreshingly honest description along with a sketch done before consulting field guides serves as an example of how reports should be submitted.

1996 Reports Not Accepted

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus intermedius*)

1996-55-A One, molting 2nd summer to 3rd winter, Democrat Point, Suffolk Co., 7 Jul. Although the committee was in complete agreement over the identification of this dark mantled gull as a Lesser Black-backed Gull, several members disagreed over the identification to subspecies. The overwhelming majority of Lesser Black-backed Gulls recorded in North America are thought to be of the subspecies *graellsii*, which breeds in Iceland and the British Isles. A small number

of darker-mantled birds have been observed in North America and it has been proposed, but not proven, that these correspond to the continental European subspecies, which is known as *intermedius*. Although photos accompanied the report, the Suffolk Co. bird was a subadult and it was not observed with other Lesser Black-backs. Immaturity is a known obstacle to the reliable assessment of mantle shade in gulls, particularly in the absence of direct comparison. Given these issues, and the existence of intermediates between *intermedius* and *graellsii* in Europe, the Committee felt that identification as *intermedius* was not adequately supported.

Reports Not Reviewed

As it stands the official NYSARC pelagic boundary between New York and New Jersey follows a straight line from an inshore point at 40° 30' 36", 73° 58' 12" to a far offshore point at 37° 50' 24", 70° 35' 00". Following this rule, two offshore reports were deemed as lying outside of New York waters and not formally reviewed. These reports will be archived and would be revisited if the New York/New Jersey boundary were to be changed.

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*)

2001-25-A One, 16 miles south of Breezy Point, Long Island, 28 May.

Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*)

2001-53-A One, seen in the New York Bite (coordinates 39° 58.270' - 73° 22.582') on 4 Sep.

Contributors

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NEW YORK'S FIRST RECORD OF PACIFIC GOLDEN-PLOVER (*Pluvialis fulva*)

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On 1 Sep 2003, Jim Ash, Andrew Baldelli and I found a Pacific Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*) at Mecox Bay in eastern Suffolk Co. During the three hours that we observed the bird, we were able to secure several fairly good photographs, and take detailed notes confirming the identification. This marks the first time a Pacific Golden-Plover has been recorded in New York State.

The Sighting

Mecox Bay is a brackish estuary along the South Shore of Long Island. Along its southern side there is a temporal inlet, which is periodically opened by the local town government in response to high water levels. When the inlet is open, the bay is tidal and a large sand flat of 2-5 hectares occurs on the north end of the inlet. This flat is a spectacular spot to find migrant shorebirds from mid-July to late September. In late August and early September 2003, some 2000 to 4000 shorebirds used the sand flat. At least 30 species of shorebirds were seen from July through September 2003.

1 Sep 2003 (Labor Day) began as a cloudy morning and a steady drizzle developed by about 8:30 AM. We arrived at the flat at 7:30 AM. Around 8 AM I spotted an adult plover in transitional plumage, from breeding to winter, although the bird still had significant vestiges of its breeding plumage. At this point the plover was about 150 meters away, and I wrote it off as a dark Black-bellied Plover (*P. squatarola*). As we birded we got within 30m of the bird, and Baldelli found the plover again. At closer range the golden spangles on the back were obvious, ruling out Black-bellied Plover. Baldelli was immediately struck by the very short extension of the primaries beyond the tail, and urged us repeatedly to study all features in detail. As we examined the bird, we noted marks that seemed to be slightly different than those of the regularly occurring American Golden-Plover (*P. dominica*). Ash noticed its relatively long bill and I noted that the undertail coverts were an immaculate white. At one point the bird flushed briefly, and we could clearly see that the tail was uniformly grayish-brown (not white), and that the bird lacked a white wing-stripe. This observation allowed us to rule out European Golden-Plover (*P. apricaria*), which would show a wing-stripe. While we all felt that this bird might not be an American Golden-Plover, none of us was completely sure of the characters that we would have to observe in order to call the bird a Pacific Golden-Plover. We then returned to our cars to look at the field guides.

After looking at the guides, we felt convinced that the bird was a legitimate contender for being a Pacific Golden-Plover and that a more detailed study of the bird was warranted. We also realized that we needed more detailed information than was provided in Hayman et al.(1986),Chandler(1989)or Sibley

(2000), which we happened to be carrying that day. Ash had other commitments and could not return to the flat. Once Baldelli and I were back on the flat watching the bird, we called P.A. Buckley, Tom Burke, and Anthony Lauro. Buckley alerted us to the characters to examine. A while later after further observation, we also talked with Tom Burke and discussed the field marks observed. At this point, it became clear that the field marks we observed favored Pacific Golden-Plover and were beginning to believe that we had found New York's first Pacific Golden-Plover!!

We reached Lauro at about 8:30 AM and he arrived at Mecox at about 10 AM. He had brought with him Byrkjedal & Thompson (1998). We reviewed the field marks outlined in that book, and then got Lauro a look at the bird. Within a minute of observation he was convinced that the bird was a Pacific Golden-Plover. Unfortunately, the bird left the flat before a group of eight or so other birders who had been alerted, arrived at 2 pm.

The Field Marks

An extensive literature exists for separating the two species in the field, and much of what follows is derived from Byrkjedal & Thompson (1998). The primary structural characters that distinguish Pacific from American are long legs, a long bill, short primary extension beyond tail and tertials, long tertials, the number of primaries projecting beyond the tertials, and the relative amount of leg showing in flight, as well as the overall "jizz". In Pacific the bare part of the visible tibia is about 50-60% as long as the tarsus, whereas in American it is 40-45%. Pacific's tarsus is as long or longer than the bill. In the field, Pacific looks tall and its knee is almost mid-way between the body and the ground. In American, the relatively short tibia brings the knee closer to the body. In Pacific the length of the bill when projected backwards falls well behind the eye, whereas in American it usually falls within the eye. Pacific has a longer and stouter bill. Its primaries extend barely beyond the tail, while in American there is significant projection of the primaries beyond the tail. Pacific has relatively long tertials and this results in only 2-4 (on average 3) primaries projecting beyond them. In American, 4-6 primaries project beyond the tertials, with the typical number being 4. A consequence of this is that the extension of the primaries beyond the tertials is relatively short in Pacific and long in American. The tertials reach the outer third of the tail in Pacific, but only the inner fourth of the tail in American. Further, in Pacific the wing tip is formed by the two longest primaries, which are nearly equal in length, whereas in American the wing- tip is formed by a single primary. In the field, the structure of the primaries and tertials give Pacific a blunt tailed appearance, while American appears to have an attenuated, or more elongate rear end. The long legs also result in projection of the toes beyond the tail in flight in Pacific, but not at all or barely so in American. Finally, Pacific appears to have a relatively large head, a slender neck and a plump body, while American appears slender bodied, with a short neck and small head (Mullarney et al. 1999).

Pacific can be easily separated from American by voice. The alarms notes are different, with Pacific having a two-noted call ("tju-itt") accented on the second syllable (which is said to sound much like Spotted Redshank), and American having a curlew-like two-noted call ("tu-li"), accented on the first syllable. Away from the breeding grounds, this is the vocalization most likely to be heard. The flight display songs and "trilling" songs of each species also differ

Separating Pacific from American is thus based on both absolute characters (i.e., those with a definitive state), such as the backwards projection of the bill onto the face, or voice, and comparative characters, such as the size of the back spangles. Each character in the two species differs subtly and determination of them requires experience with at least one of the species. In addition within both populations there is significant variability in all of these characters. Thus, the identification of Pacific Golden-Plover must be made by observing a suite of characters. As I discuss below, the bird at Mecox Bay displayed most of the characters that are consistent with Pacific and not consistent with American. In no case did we observe even a single character that favored American, although some are compatible with both species.

Analysis of the Photos

Figures 1 and 2 show profile views of the Pacific Golden-Plover found at Mecox Bay on 1 Sep 2003. The photos clearly show the large bill, the long legs, and the robust body, which character caused my initial erroneous identification of the bird as a dark Black-bellied Plover. Crossley (2003) points out that Pacific has "Black-bellied Plover jizz at times." The photos allow us to rule out Black-bellied by the dorsal golden spangles (easily visible in the color photos). That species and European Golden-Plover can be ruled out by our brief observation of the bird in flight in which we could see the grayish tail and the lack of a wing stripe.

Both photos show the very short extension of the primaries beyond the tail. At the time, Ash and I estimated the extension to be 3mm. Figure 1 also shows the very long tertials and the very short extension of the primaries beyond them. Although they cannot be seen in the photo, in the field we counted 2 primaries visible beyond the tertials, as we were not able to discern the two longest primaries as separate. In other words, this bird actually had three primaries extending beyond the primaries. The blunt

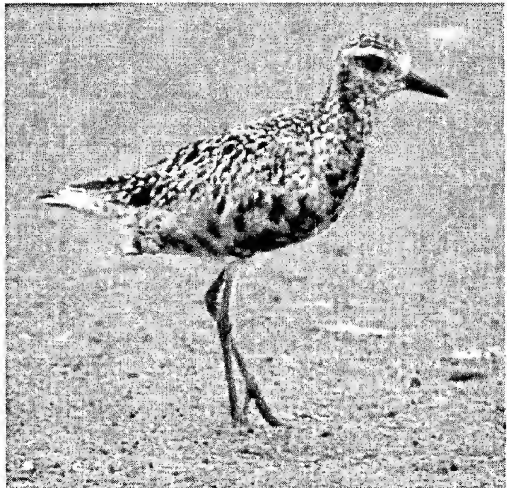


Figure 1 - Pacific Golden-Plover
©Andrew Baldelli

rear end of the Mecox Bay bird is also visible in the photos, especially Figure 2. In our brief observation of the bird in flight, we were unable to note if the toes extended beyond the tail. As for the overall appearance of the bird, it looks large bodied to me, but I'm not sure that I can claim that it is small headed or slender in the neck. In summary all of the structural characters that were observed indicated Pacific, and none of them favored American.



Figure 2 - Pacific Golden-Plover
©Andrew Baldelli

We did not hear the bird vocalize so only the plumage characters remain for discussion. It is difficult to assess the status of the flank stripe in the Mecox Bay bird since it was in a transitional plumage. However in Figure 2 a flank stripe can be imagined and the presence of gray feathers in the area is consistent with Pacific. Figure 2 shows the pure white undertail coverts. Although winter-plumaged American could show this mark, in my experience American in transition from breeding to winter plumage always show some remnants of the black feathering in the undertail coverts. In both photos the gray coverts produce

a pale patch on the folded wing. Both photos show that the black patch through the eye is paler and more diffuse than would be expected in American. The plumage characters of the Mecox Bay had states that indicate Pacific or are consistent with it. In summary, the both structural and plumage characters indicate that the Mecox Bay bird was a Pacific Golden-Plover. While there are a few character states that are consistent with both species, there are none that indicate American Golden-Plover. The two species are not known to hybridize.

Prior Occurrences and Distribution

There are three accepted prior records from the eastern United States, two in fall (both in the first half of September) and one in spring. A bird was shot at Scarborough, Maine on 11 Sep 1911 (Palmer 1949). The second record was of a bird in transitional plumage (from breeding to winter) in Cumberland and Salem counties (it flew back and forth), New Jersey from 4-16 Sep 2001 (Crossley 2002). The third record was from Plum Island, Massachusetts, 21 Apr to 5 May 2002 (Heil 2003). There is also a report of one from Delaware in late September or early October 2003, but I haven't seen any details on this sighting. In addition, Crossley (2002) reports three records from Greenland (all immatures), one from Bermuda and two from Barbados.

Pacific Golden-Plover is a rare but regular fall migrant, and a casual spring migrant in all the Pacific Coast states. It is a very rare, but annual, winter visitor in California. Away from the coast there are several records for inland California, inland Washington, Alberta, Idaho, Nevada and Arizona (P. Lehman, pers. comm.). In western Europe it is a casual vagrant in fall (Jonsson 1993, Mullarney et al. 1999)

The Pacific Golden- Plover is a long distance migrant that breeds on the tundra of eastern Siberia and western Alaska. It nests along northern coastal Siberia from the Yamal Peninsula (70 degrees East) eastwards to far western Alaska. In Alaska it can be found nesting from Point Hope south through the Seward Peninsula to Kuskokwim Bay where it is sympatric with breeding American Golden-Plover (Byrkjedal & Thompson 1998). Pacific winters from the horn of Africa east to eastern Oceania, and there is also a small group that winters in California annually. The primary wintering areas are the eastern Indian coast, Bangladesh, southeast Asia, eastern Australia and Oceania (Byrkjedal & Thompson 1998). Thus it is not unexpected that a few Pacifics might get mixed in with flocks of Americans and head south with them, and they might be likely to turn up anywhere in North America. The fact that three of the records have occurred since 2000 may be a function of the rise in popularity of digiscoping and the availability of detailed information that is applicable in the field. It was not long ago that Pacific Golden-Plover and American Golden-Plover were considered very difficult to separate even in the museum drawer.

Until recently, both were considered races of a single species *P. dominica*. Connors and his associates have demonstrated that in the area of sympatry in western Alaska both occupy different habitats even when their territories are adjacent (Pacific prefers wetter tundra, American drier sites). In addition, they have behavioral mechanisms (mainly in the form and use of flight songs and calls) that prevent interbreeding. Indeed no instances of mixed pairings were observed in Alaska, despite the proximity of nesting pairs to each other (Connors et al. 1993). When two populations are sympatric and do not interbreed, they must be valid species. Thus by the early 1990s, Pacific Golden-Plover was accorded species status by the AOU. The use of wetter tundra and shoreline habitats by Pacific has apparently affected its evolution, and has given rise to several of the structural differences that are used as field marks for separating the two species. Pacific's longer legs and longer bill would have obvious selective advantage in littoral habitats.

Acknowledgments:

I wish to thank the following people. P.A. Buckley, Thomas Burke, and Anthony J. Lauro provided crucial assistance while we were observing the bird that allowed us to make the identification. Subsequent discussion with all three of them has been invaluable in completing this note. Paul Lehman provided information on the New Jersey record and on the status of Pacific Golden-Plover throughout North America. Rick Heil forwarded a copy of his paper on the Massachusetts record.

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THE STATUS AND ECOLOGY OF THE SHORT-EARED OWL (*Asio flammeus*) IN NEW YORK STATE

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Abstract

New York's salt marshes, hayfields, and pastures are important to Short-eared Owls as wintering areas, migratory stopover sites and peripheral breeding grounds for a North American population that extends well into Canada. Some years hundreds and possibly thousands of Short-eared Owls are found in the state. They winter in significant numbers in the Finger Lakes and the Lake Ontario lake plain, especially in Jefferson County, a few scattered sites in the Hudson Valley, and on the South Shore of Long Island. They are most numerous at sites where meadow voles, their favored prey, are abundant, and during winter they roost communally in sheltered sites close to their feeding grounds. The data available for New York show that 32 wintering sites have supported at least five birds for at least five years, but nearly half of these reached their maximum occupancy before 1980. Fifty percent of these sites have had birds present since the winter of 2000.

As breeders Short-eared Owls are very rare in New York. This study identified 48 breeding season records since 1980 that reached the level of "Probable" (28) or "Confirmed" breeding (20). Today nesting in New York is limited to the St. Lawrence and Lake Champlain valleys, the Great Lakes plains and the marshes of Long Island's South Shore, but historically it also included eastern Suffolk County and the upper Hudson Valley.

In the Northeast region, five of thirteen states list Short-eared Owls as "Endangered" while two others include them on their state lists at lower levels of conservation concern. Historically these owls bred in at least eight states in the Northeast but today they nest only in Massachusetts, New York, Vermont, and Pennsylvania. The species is listed as "Endangered" in New York. More research is needed to clarify what management strategies will have the greatest impact on the conservation of Short-eared Owls. This report includes recommendations to fill important information gaps.

Introduction

Short-eared Owls are birds of open landscapes inhabiting marshlands, meadows, prairies and tundra throughout their extensive global range. Although they hunt at night like most owls, they are also active at dawn and dusk so they are seen more than other nocturnal birds of prey. In New York these owls are most often observed in winter and during migration, but on rare occasions they also breed in the state. Their presence at any site in any season is tied to the abundance of meadow voles, their primary prey. In 1999, based on the results of the state's first Breeding Bird Atlas and declines in neighboring states, the New York State

Department of Environmental Conservation elevated this species from "Special Concern" to "Endangered" status. This report compiles and reviews information on the ecology, distribution and status of the Short-eared Owl in New York State.

Habitat

Short-eared Owls inhabit a variety of open landscapes such as fresh and saltwater marshes, tundra, prairies, coastal heathlands, old fields, grasslands, shrublands, and agricultural settings (Clark 1975, Holt and Leasure 1993). Open land with an abundance of meadow voles or other small mammals is needed to support nesting. Similar habitats are used in winter but sheltered roost sites may also be important environmental features (Banfield 1947, Bosakowski 1986).

In New York Short-eared Owls are most often reported in salt marshes, hayfields, fallow farm fields, and pastures. Territories are frequently located on grasslands among ridges and valleys with low wet areas; some border wetlands and rivers. The Short-eared Owl's preference for habitats containing water is probably related to the fact that meadow voles typically occur in mesic habitats. These birds use perches for hunting, and fence posts, hay bales, small trees and shrubs, are common features of the landscapes used by Short-eared Owls.

Range and Distribution

Short-eared Owls have an extensive global range being found on every continent except Australia and on many islands, including the Greater Antilles, Cuba, Hawaii and Puerto Rico (Vickery 1983). In North America, Short-eared Owls breed from the Alaskan tundra east across Canada to Newfoundland, south to central California, northern Nevada, Utah, northeastern Colorado, Kansas, Montana, southern Illinois, northern Indiana, northern Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and northern Virginia. They winter mostly from southern Canada south throughout the United States to Baja California, central Mexico, and the Gulf Coast to Florida (The A.O.U. 1998).

Very little is known about Short-eared Owl migration patterns. It is generally accepted that these birds leave the northern parts of their North American range in the fall and move south in search of food (Craighead and Craighead 1956, Clark 1975). In Europe, birds above 50° N latitude usually migrate, while those south of this line are resident (Mikkola 1983). Holt and Leasure (1993) reported that as of November 1992 there were 47 North American band recoveries that indicated seasonal north/south migration and west/southwest movements. Clark (1975) suggested, based on banding recoveries, that there is a southward movement of the entire population in the fall. According to his hypothesis, in areas where Short-eared Owls are present year-round the local populations are actually made up of two different sets of birds. The summer breeders migrate south and are replaced by different individuals that migrate in from more northern latitudes in the fall and spend the winter. Other authors suggest that Short-eared Owls migrate only in search of food and may be resident at sites with sufficient resources. Even Clark concluded that this species possesses all the characteristics typical of "irregular migrants" (Tate 1992).

In New York State Short-eared Owls are reported in all seasons but they are much rarer during the breeding season than at any other time of year (Cooper 1998, Reilly and Parkes 1959, Bull 1974). The origins of the birds that move into New York in the fall are unknown beyond the fact that they are from farther north. They are seen in small numbers at most major hawkwatches including Derby Hill in Mexico, New York, but they usually appear as single birds (G. Smith pers. comm.). It is also assumed, but not supported by empirical data, that many of the birds that spend the winter in the state are juveniles. With a few notable exceptions, the small number of Short-eared Owls that breed in New York each year typically appear sporadically at sites that have not been reported as breeding areas in the past. It is not known if these breeders are birds that spent the previous interim in New York State. Appropriate studies to clarify the demographics and origins of New York's Short-eared Owls are sorely needed.

Food Habits

Short-eared Owls eat primarily small mammals but they occasionally take small birds, and the young sometimes eat insects (Tate 1992). For the most part their diet varies little throughout their range or seasonally; Short-eared Owls are small mammal specialists. In more than a dozen North American studies of their food habits, voles (*Microtus* spp.) have dominated the diet (Holt 1993, Holt and Leasure 1993, and references therein). Small mammal populations undergo well-documented population cycles that exhibit years of dramatic abundance and periods of extreme scarcity. These owls opportunistically inhabit areas where small mammals are abundant and their breeding sites, the number of wintering birds, the number of nesting pairs, and the numbers of eggs or young produced may change dramatically from year to year based on the food supply (Village 1987, Korpimäki and Norrdahl 1991, Mikkola 1983, Pitelka et al. 1955, Clark 1975). In New York and California they have been reported wintering in large numbers near rodent-infested dumps (Elliott 1953, Johnston 1956, Bull 1974, Fisler 1960).

In winter, changing weather conditions can affect prey availability. Unless voles are extremely abundant, deep snow and ice may reduce the availability of prey locally and cause the owls to abandon wintering areas occupied earlier in the season (Borko 1977, Clark 1975, Scheider 1958, Smith 1989). The changes observed in the numbers of birds at wintering areas and roost sites are probably a local response to changes in the availability of prey during the course of winter.

Young birds are less successful hunters than their parents, capturing prey only about 15% of the time compared to a 58% success rate for the adults (Marr and McWhirter 1982). After capturing a rodent the birds typically carry their prey in their feet to a nearby perch. However, courting or breeding birds almost always transfer the food item to their mouths before landing (Clark 1975). Short-eared Owls occasionally cache prey under small shrubs for later consumption (Holt and Leasure 1993, Young et al. 1988, Ingram 1962), but more often they bite off and swallow the head, eviscerate the body and consume it from front to back either in pieces or whole (Clark 1975).

The birds regurgitate pellets as means of eliminating the indigestible parts of their prey. They disgorge one pellet per meal, and while pellets are often found at feeding sites, they accumulate in great numbers at winter roosts (Holt and Leasure 1993). Pellet analysis is a fairly reliable way of characterizing the diet of Short-eared Owls if precautions are taken to obtain pellets from both roosts and feeding sites (Clark 1975) and care is taken to distinguish owl pellets from those of sympatric Northern Harriers (Clark 1972, Holt et al. 1987).

Winter Biology

In winter Short-eared Owls congregate in areas where prey is abundant and they often roost communally in sheltered sites close to their feeding grounds. Roosts of up to 200 birds have been reported (Bent 1938) but the number of birds using a roost probably depends on prey abundance. The number of birds roosting together varies over the course of the winter, generally increasing as the winter progresses until a maximum is reached between mid-January and mid-February (Clark 1975). Roost sites reported in the literature include a Scotch pine grove, junipers, a quarry, stump piles, gravel pits, junk yards with wrecked autos, Australian pines, yews, *Phragmites*, white pine groves, hedgerows, and second growth thickets. Most sites seem to provide shelter from the weather, especially wind. There is disagreement about the owls' ability to tolerate human disturbance near their roost sites. Hoyt (1962) reported owls roosting in junipers in a suburban housing development, and Clark (1975) wrote of a roost in an active junkyard, but at the same time he noted that the majority of his roost sites were free from human activities.

Short-eared Owls usually roost on the ground, but at least two studies have shown that they move to conifers when there is snow cover (Banfield 1947, Bosakowski 1986). Banfield (1947) suggested that the birds were less cryptic in the snow. The idea that the birds move to conifer roosts to avoid detection gains support from the observations of Craighead and Craighead (1956), who noted that Short-eared Owls select nest sites and ground roosts in fields with light-colored grasses that match their plumage. Even in conifer roosts the birds typically roost at heights of less than 8 ft, and they sometime perch very close to each other or to Long-eared Owls, with whom they often share their roost sites (Bosakowski 1986, Hendrickson and Swan 1938).

In New York winter mortality is reported from shooting, collisions with cars, fences, and guy wires, starvation, and roost predation by Great Horned Owls (VanBeurden 1955, Scheider 1959, Hoyt 1960, Spofford 1966, 1968a, Able 1990).

Breeding Biology

Data from New York show that breeding usually begins in late March and early April when winter roosts break up and the birds begin defending territories with elaborate flight displays. However, Short-eared Owls can and do breed opportunistically whenever prey are abundant. Short-eared Owls have bred in the late fall and even winter in Europe when food was abundant and temperatures were unusually warm (Brauner 1908, Bakker 1957, Eriks 1952, Grote 1930).

Similar displays are used in both territorial defense and courtship making it difficult to distinguish between the two behaviors unless one can clearly detect the presence of both the lighter male and the rustier female. During the two Breeding Bird Atlas Projects observers sometimes reported "Probable" breeding based on courtship or territorial displays, but they were unable to confirm nesting as the season progressed. Some of these observers might have been witnessing the break up of winter assemblages rather than the beginning of breeding.

Short-eared Owl home range size varies greatly and increases with decreasing prey densities (Clark 1975). Tate (1992) reported an average home range size of 51 ha in maritime heath on Nantucket, while Clark (1975) recorded a mean of 82 ha in freshwater marshes in Manitoba. The birds need good cover, and typically dense, tall herbs, for nesting.

Nests have been found on bare sand in beach grass, on flattened cattails in a wetland, in a field of goldenrod, and in uncultivated fields among alfalfa and wheat stubble (Bull 1974). Short-eared Owls build their nests on the ground, usually on dry sites that are slightly elevated, such as small knolls, hummocks and ridges. When they nest in agricultural settings their nests are sometimes plowed (Griffith 1987). Because Short-eared Owls nest on the ground their eggs and young are vulnerable to mammalian predators such as foxes, raccoons, feral cats, and skunks (Tate 1992).

The female, who may be only a year old when she first breeds, creates a cup and lines it with grasses and down (Tate 1992). A typical clutch is four to nine eggs, but clutches as large as 14 have been reported in years of peak small mammal abundance (Mikkola and Sulkara 1969). In New York clutch sizes range from one (Spofford 1968b) to nine (Chamberlaine 1997) and eggs have been reported as early as 2 Apr (Bull 1974) and as late as 27 May (Novak 1987). No more than one nest per breeding season has ever been observed in New York, although two broods have occasionally been reported in some parts of their range.

Incubation is by the female alone beginning with the first egg, and lasts a little less than a month. The eggs hatch asynchronously and although the young disperse from the nest after two weeks, fledging does not occur until about two weeks later (Tate 1992, Clark 1975). Young birds about two weeks old have been reported as early as 7 May in New York State (Worthington 1893). While both parents hunt for food for the young, only the female actually feeds and broods them (Holt and Leasure 1993). Once fledged, the young birds remain on the parents' territory for at least a week or two, where they roost with the family during the day and are fed by the parents until they become independent (Holt and Leasure 1993).

Status and Trends in the Northeast

Breeding Bird Survey trend analyses for the Northeast are not statistically meaningful for Short-eared Owls because of variable counts and small sample sizes. Survey-wide a slight decline is indicated in the 1960s but very few were observed in the eastern portion of their range and only small numbers were reported in central and western North America (Sauer, et al. 2001).

Table 1. Legal Status and Current Breeding Status of Short-eared Owl in the Northeast.

<u>State</u>	<u>Legal Status</u> ¹	<u>Breeding Status</u> ²
Maine		historical
New Hampshire		
Vermont		extant
Massachusetts	endangered	extant
Rhode Island		
Connecticut	threatened	historical
New York	endangered	extant
New Jersey	endangered	historical
Pennsylvania	endangered	extant
Delaware	endangered	
Maryland	special concern	historical

¹ Northeast Endangered Species and Wildlife Diversity Technical Committee 2001

² Melvin et al. 1989

Because of declining populations and a lack of data, the Short-eared Owl has been listed as a species of regional conservation concern in the northeastern United States since 1999 (Northeast Endangered Species and Wildlife Diversity Technical Committee 1999). As of 2001 five of the 13 states in this region listed Short-eared Owl as "Endangered" while two other states included it on their state lists at lower levels of conservation concern (Table 1, Northeast Endangered Species and Wildlife Diversity Technical Committee 2001). Melvin et al. (1989) reported that the Short-eared Owl is the rarest and most threatened species of owl nesting in the Northeast. Historically it bred in at least eight of the thirteen northeastern states, but today it nests only in Massachusetts, New York, Vermont, and Pennsylvania, having been lost from Maine, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Maryland.

Melvin et al. (1989) also looked at the regional status of Short-eared Owl using winter data from Christmas Counts. The data showed no clear trends for the 13 northeastern states between 1963 and 1983.

Status and Trends in New York State

Early in the twentieth century Eaton (1914) wrote in *Birds of New York State* that the Short-eared Owl is "one of our commonest owls" outnumbering all other owls in lowlands and marshy areas. In cultivated landscapes he reported that only screech-owls were more common, and he commented on marked increases observed in the state in October/November and March/April. Eaton mentioned four breeding areas specifically: Plum Island off eastern Long Island, several sites in the western part of the state, the marshes along the Seneca River above and below Montezuma, and the wetlands near the eastern end of Lake Ontario. Working from published local lists he compiled a table that included breeding records from 14 counties (Eaton 1910). His text mentions breeding in two more counties for a total of 16 county records as of the early twentieth century.

Sixty years later Bull (1974) noted a change in status calling the Short-eared Owl a "local breeder, greatly decreased in recent years." Even outside the breeding season he found it "generally uncommon" as both a migrant and winter visitant, although he commented on their irregular occurrence in the state. Like Eaton, he showed breeding in the western part of the state and throughout Long Island, but he was "unable to find a single instance of nesting" on the wetlands near the eastern end of Lake Ontario. As a result, Bull's (1974) distribution map includes a question mark in this part of the state (Figure 1). He lists 29 breeding records from 12 counties, including 15 from Long Island and New York City and another 14 from central and western New York.

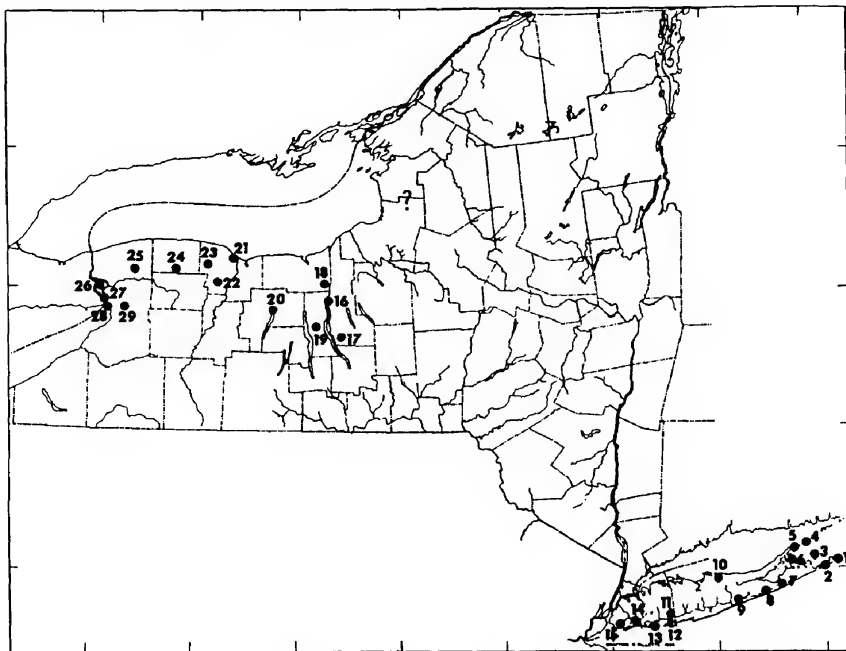


Figure 1. Short-eared Owl breeding sites from Bull 1974.

Methods

In order to document the current status and distribution of Short-eared Owl in New York, I compiled breeding records from all the readily available sources of avian records. These included *The Kingbird* Regional reports through spring 2002, the database from the first New York State Breeding Bird Atlas, the database records and notable species forms from *Atlas 2000* through September 2002, the archives of several local and regional listserves including Northern NY Birds from February 2000 to April 2002, Oneida Birds from June 1995 through September 2002, and Bird East from January 6, 1995 through April 14, 2002. Bird East distributes electronic postings from many Regional listserves, including Finger Lakes Bird Line, WNY Dial-a-Bird, Rochester RBA, Syracuse RBA, and the NYC RBA. I also collected information from the New York Natural Heritage Program databases and the manual files of DEC's Endangered Species Unit. To clarify and augment some of this data I contacted many individuals by telephone or e-mail. These conversations uncovered a number of private databases, some listing hundreds of Short-eared Owl records specific to certain parts of New York State. These included: the Buffalo Ornithological Society Database of Noteworthy Bird Records from the *Prothonotary* (1964-1997), William Ostrander's Kingbird Region 3 database (1998-2002), the Finger Lakes Region Short-eared Owl Census (1992), and Gerald Smith's birds of prey database (1977-2002). I reviewed these databases for important new information on probable or confirmed breeding records or large winter assemblages. Using information from all these sources I created two Access databases for Short-eared Owls, one containing information on breeding records (1 Mar through 30 Aug) and a second with data on wintering areas (1 Sep through 29 Feb).

While these Access databases probably represent the most comprehensive compilation of New York State data on Short-eared Owls since Bull (1974), several deficiencies should be mentioned. Specifically, the reporting of Short-eared Owls in *The Kingbird* varies from Region to Region, and some Regional editors do not publish all the information they receive on this species. In addition some records were difficult to interpret. For example, a report of 67 Short-eared Owls on eight Christmas Counts in Region 10 (NYC and Long Island) could not easily be tied to any specific location. Data collected from road tours, hawkwatches, and Christmas Counts were excluded from further analysis unless I could tie them to a well-documented wintering area or breeding site. In addition, some sites reported in *The Kingbird* had multiple names. By talking to the Regional editors and examining maps for road and town names, I was able to unravel many but not all of these synonyms. I excluded data whenever I could not be sure of the geographic location.

Results

Using these sources I was able to identify 48 breeding season records since 1980 that reached the level of "Probable" (28) or "Confirmed" breeding (20). These nesting attempts occurred at 36 different sites distributed over 19 counties. They included four of the sites identified in Bull (1974). Eight of the county records were not documented by either Eaton or Bull (Madison, Clinton, Jefferson, Livingston, Allegany, St. Lawrence, Chemung, Schuyler; Table 2).

Table 2. County Records for Breeding Short-eared Owls

<u>County</u>	<u>Eaton 1914</u>	<u>Bull 1974</u>	<u>Schneider 2002</u>
Allegany			X
Cayuga	X	X	
Chemung			X
Clinton			X
Erie	X	X	
Essex	X		X
Genesee	X		
Jefferson			X
Kings		X	X
Lewis	X		
Livingston		X	
Madison	X		X
Monroe	X	X	X
Nassau		X	X
Niagara	X	X	X
Onondaga	X		X
Ontario	X	X	X
Orleans	X	X	X
Oswego	X		
Queens		X	X
Rensselaer	X		
Saratoga	X		X
Schuyler			X
Seneca	X	x	
St. Lawrence			X
Suffolk	X	X	X
Wayne		X	
TOTAL	16	12	19

Based on these data it appears both Eaton and Bull had incomplete information about the breeding season distribution of Short-eared Owls in the northern part of the state. Records from the St. Lawrence Valley, the Champlain Valley and Jefferson County make up nearly half of the nesting records since 1980 and the two breeding birds atlas projects clearly helped fill in this gap. Although these data may be incomplete, the post 1980 distribution map also suggests that this species may have been lost as a breeder from eastern Suffolk County and the upper Hudson Valley (Figure 2).

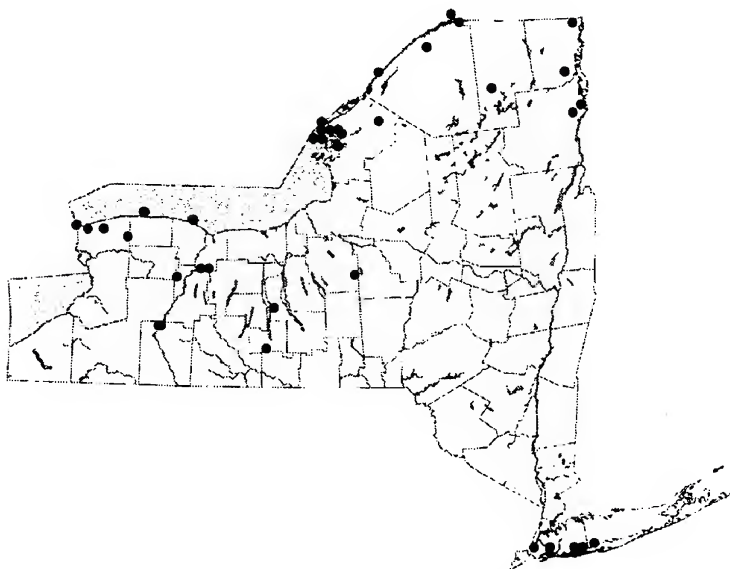


Figure 2. "Probable" and "Confirmed" Short-eared Owl breeding sites 1980–2002.

Because neither Eaton nor Bull tried to give a statewide perspective on the status and distribution of Short-eared Owl in winter, it is much more difficult to draw conclusions about winter population trends. Eaton considered the bird a common winter visitant in 1914, but he did not discuss any specific roosts or wintering areas. Bull cites three "big years" inland, 1962, 1965 and 1969, and gives winter maxima at six large roosts during those years. Along the coast he documented only one large concentration in 1959 when 40 birds were reported at Canarsie Pol, Jamaica Bay.

I used the data compiled from the sources mentioned above to identify important wintering areas throughout New York State. Winter aggregations only form near good feeding areas, so to some extent large winter concentrations can

be used to identify sites with good numbers of *Microtus*. Unfortunately, because small rodents undergo population cycles, these habitats may not support large numbers of owls every year. Therefore I arbitrarily labeled sites important wintering areas if they supported at least five birds and had owls present in at least five years. These criteria allowed me to identify the 32 important wintering areas that are mapped in Figure 3. The data from these sites show that they may persist for many years. On average these 32 wintering areas were occupied off and on over 29 years with ranges running from 13 to 45 years. Forty-nine percent of them reached their maximum occupancy, which varied from 6 to 76 birds, before 1980. Fifty percent of the sites have had birds present since the winter of 2000.

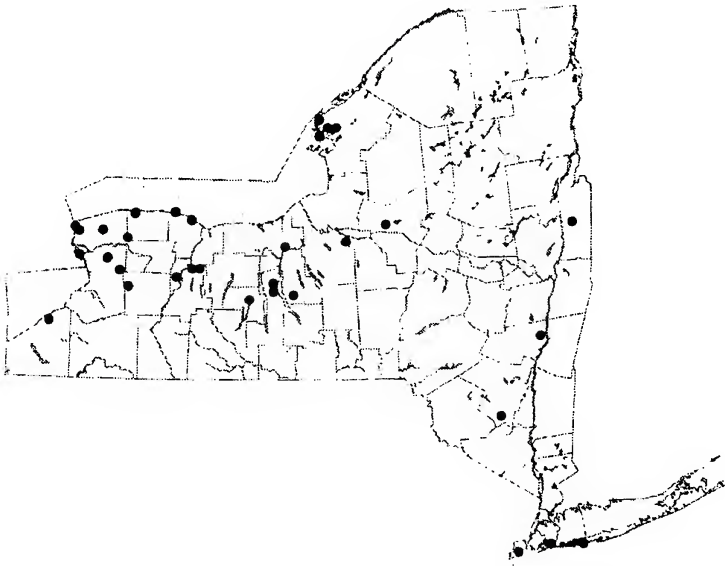


Figure 3. Important Short-eared Owl wintering areas. Each site at some time supported at least five birds and had owls present for at least five years.

Audubon Christmas Count data on Short-eared Owls are shown in Figure 4 (National Audubon Society 2002). While early counts covered only a limited area of the state and had relatively few participants, the New York State data since 1940 show clear peaks and valleys. The top five winter counts occurred 1945, 1961, 1962, 1969, and 1991. Like the Breeding Bird Survey data, the high variability from year to year makes it difficult to discern any clear population trends. I found no relationship between high Christmas Count years and the years when wintering areas had their peak numbers of owls.

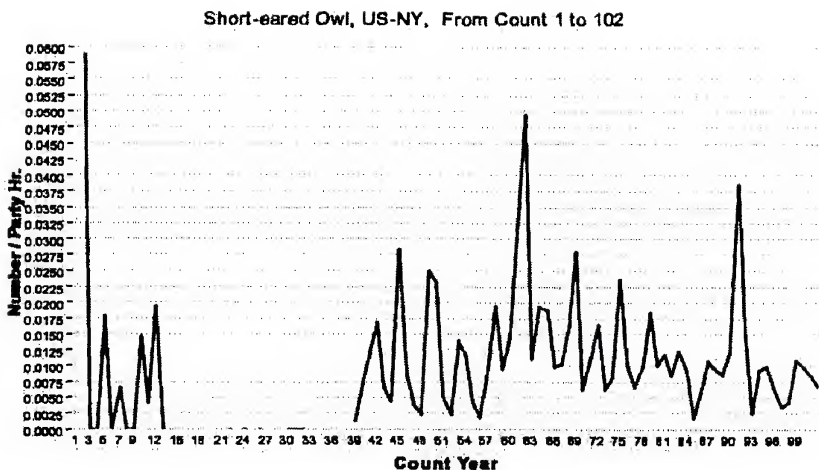


Figure 4. Number of Short-eared Owls/party hour on National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts in New York State 1901–2002 (National Audubon Society 2002).

Both Holt and Leasure (1993) and Clark (1975) reported that wintering areas often turn into breeding areas if food is plentiful, and Clark noted two specific examples in Manitoba. “Probable” or “Confirmed” breeding has occurred at or near 14 of the 32 important wintering areas. If it is wintering birds that stay and breed at these sites, one might expect more breeding in the years when many birds spend the winter in New York State. Figure 5 shows the number of “Probable” or “Confirmed” nesting records and the number of Short-eared Owls observed per party hour on Christmas Counts by year. While the relationship between these two variables is not statistically significant, the data are clearly suspect since observer coverage varies greatly by year and location. Alternatively, the number of breeders in New York in any one year may bear no relationship to the number of birds that winter in the state. Rather, breeding populations could be controlled by other factors such as vole populations in New York or even in Canada.

Management and Research Recommendations

The data presented here suggest that New York’s open habitats are important to Short-eared Owls as wintering areas and peripheral breeding sites for a North American population that extends well into Canada. Even the limited information currently available confirms that in some years there are certainly hundreds and possibly thousands of Short-eared Owls in New York in winter. Breeding birds are more scarce, but New York’s nesting owls are birds at the southern edge of their range. Biologists have shown that these rare peripheral breeders may be evolutionarily important because they harbor interesting and

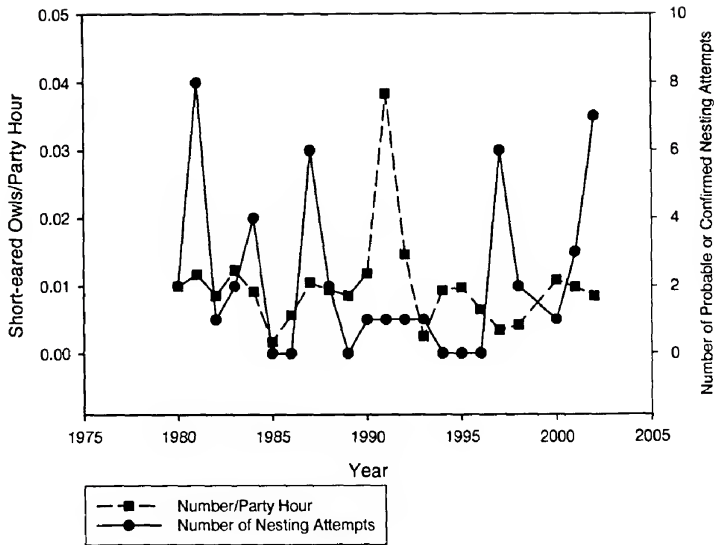


Figure 5. Number of Short-eared Owls/party hour on National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts and “Probable” or “Confirmed” nesting attempts 1980–2002..

unusual genetic information (Millar and Libby 1991). However, more research is needed to clarify what management strategies will have the greatest impact on the conservation of Short-eared Owls. The projects listed below will help fill some important information gaps.

1. Map traditional wintering areas and roost sites. New York almost certainly provides important wintering habitat for Short-eared Owls. Wintering areas that traditionally support more than single birds need to be mapped to identify foraging habitat and roost sites. Much of the information needed to map important wintering areas is available at the local level and more could be learned by interviewing local birders.
2. Monitor wintering areas and roost sites each winter. At least some wintering areas and roost sites should be systematically monitored using standardized methodology. Village (1987) and Craighead and Craighead (1956) described roadside surveys that can be used in open habitats to monitor raptor populations. If roost sites are known it is also possible to count owls as they emerge in the late afternoon. These kinds of data, consistently collected throughout the winter over a period of several years, would let us know if the Christmas Bird Counts are an accurate way to monitor the number of Short-eared Owls in New York in winter. It might also provide information on how these numbers change over the course of the winter.

3. Monitor wintering areas and recently occupied breeding sites for breeding birds. Since many wintering areas eventually become breeding sites, wintering areas and recently occupied breeding sites should be systematically surveyed for breeding birds. In New York courtship is usually observed in April and May, eggs are typically laid from mid-April to mid-May, and young are present in June and July. Combs and Griffin (1990) reported that birds on Nantucket are most visible in June at dawn and 2-3 hr before sunset. Field surveys for breeding birds should be designed to take these factors into account.
4. Learn the age, sex, origins, and migration routes of New York's Short-eared Owls. A holistic approach to the conservation of Short-eared Owls in New York State requires that we know something about every stage of their life cycle, including where they breed, where they migrate, and where they spend the winter. Since owls can be easily aged and sexed, we might learn more about the demographics of New York birds by compiling data from museum specimens. However, this sample could be biased if young birds are more likely to be killed. Better and more detailed information will require trapping some birds and fitting them with radio or satellite transmitters to follow them over a period of many months.
5. Quantify the habitat characteristics of sites used by New York's Short-eared Owls. Although the basic habitat requirements of Short-eared Owls are known, but it would be useful to gather quantitative habitat data on occupied sites in New York State. Herkert et al. (1999) reported that Short-eared Owls in Illinois required relatively short grass (< 50 cm), and that in the Midwest most idle grasslands are too tall for Short-eared Owls so that their grasslands need to be mowed or burned to reduce overall grass height. While Short-eared Owls usually prefer large grasslands (Herkert 1991, Herkert 1992, Robinson 1991), their data suggested that the birds might respond equally well to the total amount of grassland within the landscape. We need to identify the kinds of grasslands in New York State that can support large populations of meadow voles and that are structurally suitable for Short-eared Owls both in winter and during the breeding season. By gathering data from occupied sites and developing a habitat model, it might be possible to use a combination of aerial photos, geographic information systems and field surveys to identify new habitats. These sites could be targeted for field surveys by breeding bird atlas observers and Christmas Count participants.
6. Manage and protect consistently occupied sites. Finally it important the few remaining sites that are consistently occupied by Short-eared Owls either in summer or winter be protected and managed in a way that takes into consideration their known habitat requirements. Many of the naturally open habitats that were historically used by Short-eared Owls, such as heathlands, maritime grasslands, wetlands, and barrens have probably been lost. Outside Long Island the only naturally open habitats of adequate size are probably wetlands and alvar grasslands. Fortunately many of these sites are already in

public or conservation ownership and many of them are already known to support other state-rare grassland birds such as Northern Harrier, Upland Sandpiper, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Henslow's Sparrow. Targeted surveys are needed to determine if they are also used by Short-eared Owls.

To compensate for the loss of naturally open habitats to development, reforestation and incompatible agricultural practices, it will be necessary to manage man-made grasslands for Short-eared Owls and other grassland birds. Fort Drum and Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge are examples of man-made grasslands in public ownership and that are being successfully managed for grassland birds, including Short-eared Owls. However, many of the sites that are currently occupied by Short-eared Owls are used for agriculture. They include hayfields, fallow fields and unoccupied pastures that, for a short time before the invasion of woody species, are suitable for Short-eared Owls. The long-term maintenance of these sites for grassland birds will require active management through mowing or burning. Public-private partnership programs like the USDA NRCS Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program or Conservation Reserve Program may be the key to promoting habitat protection and slowing the conversion of grasslands to row crops and development.

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A DISCUSSION OF CHANGES ARISING FROM THE FORTY-FOURTH SUPPLEMENT TO THE AOU CHECK-LIST

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The American Ornithologists' Union's *Check-list of North American Birds* is the primary taxonomic authority for *The Kingbird* and, indeed, the vast majority of North American ornithological publications. The revisions to this work, which are published periodically as Supplements in *The Auk*, are a source of diverse reactions within the birding community. Amusement, frustration, satisfaction, and resentment have followed these official pronouncements over the years. An obvious reason for some birders to care about the details of taxonomy involves the waxing and waning fortunes of their lists, but some of the strongest reactions I can recall have involved changes to popular and time-honored English names. The present note provides some discussion and explanation of the changes adopted in the most recent 44th Supplement (*The Auk* 120: 923-931).

Of the seven changes to the New York State Checklist summarized in *The Kingbird* (53: 218), three are minor alterations of names that do not substantively alter our understanding of the relationships among birds. Two of these reflect slight grammatical modifications to the endings of specific names to bring them into conformity with the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature: *Poecile atricapilla* (Black-capped Chickadee) should be *P. atricapillus* (as it once was); and *Seiurus aurocapillus* (Ovenbird) should be *S. aurocapilla*. These relate to the issue of whether the names were originally intended as adjectives or as nouns in apposition, which in turn would determine whether they must agree in gender with their current genus names. Another revision reflects a change in an English name (Rock Dove to Rock Pigeon) to conform to a recent name change by the British Ornithologists' Union.

The remaining changes are less pedantic and reflect revised interpretations of taxonomic relationships at various levels. For example, the change from *Picoides tridactylus* (Three-toed Woodpecker) to *P. dorsalis* (American Three-toed Woodpecker) reflects the splitting of the former species. On the basis of genetic and vocal differences, the North American populations (including those found in NYS) have been split from the Eurasian populations and placed in their own species.

At the genus level, the screech-owl genus *Otus* has also been split. Almost all of the New World species formerly placed in *Otus* (including NYS' Eastern Screech-Owl) have been given the genus name *Megascops* to reflect their close relationships to one another and their distinctiveness with respect to Old World species of *Otus*.

Also at the genus level, the Snowy Owl's monotypic genus *Nyctea* has been merged with the genus *Bubo*. Although the Snowy Owl's distinctive plumage might seem sufficiently different from that of Great Horned and Eagle owls to

warrant a separate genus, genetic data show that some members of *Bubo* are more closely related to the Snowy Owl than they are to other members of *Bubo*. Retaining Snowy Owl in its own genus would therefore misrepresent known relationships — or require that additional genera be created for the less closely related species currently placed in *Bubo*.

The final change affecting the NYS Checklist involves a major shift in our understanding of the higher-order relationships among birds. The 7th Edition of the AOU Check-List(1998) recognizes that modern birds fall into two superorders—one comprising the ratites and tinamous (Paleognathae), and the other comprising all other extant orders of birds (Neognathae). In general, there has been very little consensus among ornithologists regarding the relationships among orders within the Neognathae, but a series of studies over the last several decades has clarified this problem to some extent. Multiple lines of evidence support the view that the order Anseriformes (ducks, geese, swans, and relatives) is the sister-group of the order Galliformes (chachalacas, pheasants, grouse, and relatives)—and furthermore that this pair (generally known as the Galloanseres) is the sister-group of the remainder of the Neognathae (all other typical birds). The immediate practical effects of recognizing these relationships are to move the Anseriformes and Galliformes next to each other in checklist sequences, and to move them both to a position at the start of Neognathae. Because NYS obviously has no accepted records of wild ratites or tinamous, this means that our state list will now begin with Whistling-Ducks—Fulvous for now, but perhaps Black-bellied in the future!

CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF NEW YORK STATE

Published by the
Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc.©2003

This checklist includes all species for which acceptable specimen photographic or written documentation exists for New York State. The list has been approved by the Federation's New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC) and includes 460 species representing 19 orders and 62 families of birds. The names of the birds and their taxonomic arrangement follow the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) Checklist of North American Birds (Seventh Edition, 1998), and supplements published in *The Auk* July 2000 (42nd Supplement), July 2002 (43rd Supplement) and July 2003 (44th Supplement). Copies of the *Checklist of the Birds of New York State* may be ordered from, and checks payable to:

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The Beastie Boys and The Grasshopper Sparrows*

“... this event is absolutely happening,”
avows promoter of “Field Day Festival,” June 7-8, 2003
acclaimed and assailed
as one of the most massive rock concerts on Long Island,
thirty-five thousand fans flying in, driving in, motorcycling in
from upstate New York, from Washington, from the Pacific Coast
to Long Island’s old 2,900-acre U. S Navy site in Calverton,
parking, pitching tents
rocking to the Beastie Boys, Radiohead, Beck, Liz Phair.

Calverton, almost the last savannah on Long Island,
one of the most important northeastern grasslands
for birthing generations of Grasshopper Sparrows,
Amrnodramus savannarum, a species of “special concern.”

Early June,
Grasshopper Sparrows on territory,
courting, building grassy cupped nests
in sight, hearing of concert platform, strobe lights, amplifiers,
60-foot towers of steel scaffolding for speakers
heaping up volume of rock, rap, heavy metal,
Beastie Boys barreling forth “Hello Nasty,”
“No Sleep ‘til Brooklyn,” “Putting Shame in Your Game.”

Come,
watch a yellow-shouldered five-inch bird balance on little bluestem,
hold erect his brown and whitish striped head,
his bill quivering, zip forth lengthening lines,
tik-zzzzzzz, tik-zzzzzzz, tik-zzzzzzz,
female answering with sweet trills.

Come,
enjoy this tiny avian recital
before arrival of boot and blare.

Maxwell Corydon Wheat, Jr.

*Note: The concert was moved to New Jersey. The cancellation was not entirely because of conservation protests, but they undoubtedly played a role.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SUMMER SEASON –2003

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The Weather

June was a cool and wet month across the state, continuing a trend begun in May. The average temperature statewide was the coldest in the past ten years, two degrees below average. Hand in hand with the cool weather was precipitation. Western and central regions reporting frequent light rain, while downstate Regions were hit harder, with, for example, 8" inches of rain in White Plains(R9), about 4.6" above normal, and a record 10.27" in R10. July temperatures were generally normal or somewhat cooler, although Regions 7 and 8 experienced warm spells. Four Regions reported below average precipitation and four others above. August was the second warmest and the wettest statewide in the last ten years. The western part of the state was drier, with the rain scattered. Many of the Regional reports have interesting observations on how the season's weather impacted breeding birds and food crops

Breeding Birds

As usual, much of the birding focus during the summer of 2003 was on breeding activity spurred by the fourth year of Atlas 2000. A significant highlight this year was New York State's first documented breeding of Sandhill Cranes, with a pair of adults and one chick found in the Town of Savannah in Region 2. The increasing occurrence of this species in western and central New York had led to speculation that breeding was imminent.

Always of concern is the status of grassland breeding birds, due particularly to the intense development pressure in many areas that results in habitat parcels too small to support viable populations. As a result, there has been a continuing long-term decline in many grassland species. Henslow's Sparrow numbers were again down statewide, with a single colony in Region 3, birds at two locations in Regions 1 and 6, and "a very poor year" in Region 2, the only reports. The extirpation of our breeding population remains a real concern, mirroring the disappearance of the breeding population in nearby Ontario, Canada..

Somewhat surprisingly, the wet weather early in the breeding season may have benefited certain grassland species in some locations. Region 4 Editor Spencer Hunt mentions that many fields couldn't be cut as early as usual, which may have led to the large numbers of Bobolinks reported there later in the season. Perhaps this also led to the breeding success of Savannah Sparrows, Bobolinks and Eastern Meadowlarks reported by Region 8 Editor Will Yandik. Another encouraging sign was a count of 12-14 Sedge Wrens in Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties in Region 6, the highest count there since 1997.

A species definitely on the upswing in the state is Clay-colored Sparrow, with reports this summer from 7 of the state's 10 Regions, with 30+ singing males at Fort Drum and "unprecedented numbers" in Region 2. Prothonotary Warbler was reported from 6 Regions, with breeding confirmed in Region 5 and in somewhat out of range in Region 9.

Species continuing a decreasing trend in many Regions included Blue-winged Teal, Common Moorhen, Black Tern, Common Nighthawk, Whip-poor-will and Golden-winged Warbler. The long-standing Chuck-will's Widow colony at Jones Beach in western Suffolk County, where New York's first breeders were found in 1975, may have fallen victim to the fungus disease which has decimated the Japanese Black Pines along the barrier beach. No birds were reported from this location, although there were reports further east on Long Island. Wilson's Phalarope did not follow up on the breeding success of previous years, as no potential breeders were reported in Region 7, where breeding had been previously confirmed, or in Regions 1, 2 and 3, where possible breeders were present last summer. The Piping Plover nesting protection program at Jones Beach has benefited the plovers as well as a returning colony of Least Terns, this year up to an encouraging 450+ pairs. On a positive note, both species of cuckoos were widely reported in good numbers.

Raptors are always sought after breeders. An encouraging sign this summer is the continuing increase of Bald Eagles, which were reported from all but one Region, with new breeding areas in several Regions and a general increase in numbers widely reported. Only one active nest reported in Region 6 compared with six last year was a contrary note. Region 10's summering Bald Eagles come with a caveat. For the second time, NYC park officials, despite a lack of evidence that eagles had ever historically bred in the area, attempted to introduce eagles into the city, with four fledglings from Wisconsin introduced at Inwood Hill Park. Read the disastrous results of last year's attempt in the R10 report. Cooper's Hawks, on the other hand, after an absence of 50+ years, have moved back into Region 10 with no direct assistance, with breeding confirmed at three locations ranging from The Bronx to eastern Long Island. Merlin is also rapidly increasing in the state, breeding at two locations each in Regions 5 and 7, the first breeding record outside the Adirondacks in Region 4, and possible breeders in Regions 1 and 3 — an amazing increase given that the first firm confirmation of breeding in the state was as recent as 1992.

An intriguing possible breeding report from Region 1 began with a good record on its own merits. A Western Kingbird, unusual anytime away from the coast, and especially rare in summer, was found in Chautauqua County. Following its discovery, a nonbirding local resident reported having seen it nesting, but never saw its partner. A full account of this incident will appear in the March 2004 issue of *The Kingbird*.

A down note in the breeding season was the result of a habitat restoration program in southeastern Westchester County. A reintroduction program for salt-marsh grasses led to the destruction of a productive fresh-water area which had previously supported a pair of breeding King Rails, critically "Endangered" on a

state level, as well as breeding Least Bitterns, a state species of "Concern". The outcome is a reminder that in this age of human impact, even the best-intentioned programs may have an unfortunate local result.

Finally, the continued surveys documenting the avifaunal richness of Fort Drum in Region 6 give intriguing estimates of breeding populations of many species, such as 60-70 Common Nighthawks, greater than 200 Whip-poor-wills, 5-6 pairs of Red-headed Woodpeckers, increasing numbers of Prairie Warblers, 4-5 singing male Cerulean Warblers, the previously-mentioned 30+ singing male Clay-colored Sparrows, about 100 singing male Vesper Sparrows, about 35+ singing Grasshopper Sparrows, and 5 singing Henslow's Sparrows. These surveys lead one to hope that further documentation and preservation of the property will be ensured for the future.

Shorebird Migration

The summer season links the northward passage of breeding-bound shorebirds as well as the beginning of the return passage of south bound adults. As expected, the coastal areas of Region 10 hosted the widest variety, with locally uncommon American Avocet, Ruff and Red-necked Phalarope reported, although the former two in lower numbers than some recent years. Upstate areas reported mixed results, with Region 7 hosting a surprising variety, especially at the recently opened Noblewood Park, and Region 8 reporting uncommonly high local concentrations. Higher than normal water levels at many locations in Regions 1 and 5 resulted in a downturn in shorebird variety and numbers. Notable records upstate included late spring Willets in Regions 1 and 3, three American Avocets in Region 1, Red-necked Phalarope in Region 3, and high numbers of Baird's Sandpiper in Regions 1, 5, 7 and especially Region 3, with a state-record count of 22 at Montezuma on 26 Aug. In contrast to some recent years when Asian strays have provided the excitement, a Wilson's Plover present for two days in early June at Mecox Bay in Suffolk County was the season's rarity highlight.

Pelagic species

A wide variety of seabirds was reported from offshore in Region 10, with reasonable numbers of Cory's, Greater and Sooty shearwaters in June, and reports of Northern Fulmar and Manx Shearwater. The accumulation of evidence has shown that in the right season and conditions White-faced Storm-Petrel can be expected in low numbers, and an August trip to Hudson Canyon bore this out with a single bird seen well. Also seen on this trip was a single Audubon's Shearwater, another species that has come to be expected on late summer trips that reach warm water. Another summer specialty was a South Polar Skua seen on a trip south of Montauk Point. It was not a particularly good year for onshore (birds seen from shore) pelagics, other than the expected Wilson's Storm-Petrels, but the regular shearwaters were only seen in small numbers, and a scattering of Parasitic Jaeger sightings was supplemented by single onshore sightings of Pomarine and Long-tailed jaegers

Interesting Summer strays, wanderers and rarities

Region 1's Batavia Waste Water Treatment Plant again hosted 1-2 Eared Grebes. These now expected summer visitors leads to speculation that New York's first breeding record may be in the not-too-distant future. An unseasonal Great Cormorant provided the first summer record for that Region and only the third overall, while a Cattle Egret was the Region's first since 1989. *Oporornis* warblers were the highlight in Region 2. The Connecticut Warbler banded at Kaiser-Manitou Beach in August paled in comparison to the well-photographed adult male MacGillivray's Warbler banded there in early June, only the second record for New York State. Another Connecticut Warbler, this one banded in early June on Staten Island, was a rare spring record for the eastern part of the state. Wandering gulls included Little in Regions 2, 5 and 7 (six reported!); Black-headed Gull in Regions 7 (only the second Regional record) and 10; upstate Laughing Gulls in Regions 2 and 3; Lesser Black-backed in Region 2 and a highly unseasonal Glaucous Gull in Region 10. Aside from the breeding pair in Region 2, Sandhill Cranes were reported from four other Regions spanning the state, from westerly Regions 1 and 3, where the species is more regular, to the southeast in Region 10, and to the north, where a sighting in Region 7 was a first Franklin County record. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers staged a mini-invasion on 5 Jul, with an adult male in Region 7 and an immature in Region 9, first and second Regional records, respectively. Another was described by nonbirders in late July in Region 10. Single Golden Eagles were reported in Regions 3 and 5, the latter a first summer record for the Region. Region 5's first Chuck-will's Widow lingered from spring just into the summer season. Downstate, oddities from Region 9 included wanderers from the south, Blue Grosbeak and Summer Tanager, and one from the west, Rufous Hummingbird, which is more expected now in late fall and early winter than summer. Region 10 hosted a long-staying female King Eider at Jamaica Bay, an elusive White Ibis, and mid-summer Lark Sparrow, Evening Grosbeak, and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

Miscellaneous

An early report of the western subspecies of Willet in R10 highlights that our knowledge of the species in NY is a work in progress. Their current ubiquity on Long Island's South Shore masks the fact that the eastern subspecies has only bred in NY since 1966. Historical fall maxima (presumed to be entirely the western subspecies) were typically in the mid-teens. Now, large late-summer congregations of Willets are regularly found. Do these represent an increase in "western" Willets, or the staging of the now larger breeding population of "eastern" Willets before heading south, as we see with Black Skimmers and Laughing Gulls? Future observations may shed more light on the situation, complicated, however, by the fact that the two subspecies may not always be separable in the field.

The R7 report discusses a Savannah Sparrow found where a Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow was last summer. It was heard singing a "hybrid" song, with

the typical Savannah beginning and a Nelson's Sharp-tailed's finish. The bird appeared to be a standard Savannah, so presumably hybridization didn't occur, but it's interesting to speculate on whether this is a case of a Savannah Sparrow learning part of its repertoire from the sharp-tailed present there last year.

Finally, perhaps in a case of "first highlights" anxiety, I find myself torn between two Birds of the Season. Therefore, I'll exercise editorial discretion, and in a nod to the somewhat dual nature of the season, award a "Breeding Bird of the Season" (BBOTS?) to New York's first breeding Sandhill Cranes, and a standard "Bird of the Season" to the second state record of MacGillivray's Warbler.

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[HTTP://LISTSERV.ARIZONA.EDU/ARCHIVES/BIRDWEST.HTML](http://LISTSERV.ARIZONA.EDU/ARCHIVES/BIRDWEST.HTML)

REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

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June was cool, especially the first five days. The average temperature was 63.5F, 2.3 below average. Rain was frequent but not heavy in the first two weeks. Only 1.80" of rain fell in the month, which was 2.02" below normal. July was fairly average, but not as sunny as usual. The average temperature was 69.6, 1.2 below normal. Rain was once again frequent but not heavy, with 3.69" of precipitation, 0.55" above the average. August was warm, sunny and dry. The average temperature was 70.8, 1.7 above normal. Precipitation was 2.47", falling 1.4" less than usual. [Weather data excerpted from National Weather Service *Monthly Weather Summary* for Buffalo.]

There were some good finds during the fourth summer of the Atlas 2000 project. However, the three most intriguing reports did not involve confirmed breeding. Despite the growing number of **Merlins** that have wintered near the SUNY Buffalo south campus in the past few years, no one expected that the species might actually breed in the area. Peter Yoerg found two Merlins on 23 July and three the next day, roosting on campus. The birds were seen in the area several times through August. After the July Merlins were included on the Buffalo bird hotline, "Dial-a-bird," a follow-up report was received from a non-birder of up to four Merlins present since springtime in nearby Eggertsville. The report included a likely nest tree plus observations of hunting and sharing food between the birds. While this report could not be confirmed, especially considering that Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks also frequent the area, it encourages hope that a nest site can be found next year. A documented report of a Merlin just a few miles away in Buffalo in mid June lends further credence to the possibility that this species may breed in the Region.

Two **Sandhill Cranes** were seen throughout the summer by refuge staff at Iroquois NWR, following the sighting of three together on 4 June. Birders and refuge staff hope that breeding is in the near future, similar to that of the cranes at Montezuma NWR, which were present for several summers before breeding was attempted, or at least confirmed.

Terry Mosher found and Dick Miga videotaped a **Western Kingbird** in the Town of Portland on 28 June. While any sighting of this rarity is interesting, this one turns bizarre. A local resident insisted that she had seen the same bird nesting in her yard, approximately 150 yards from Mosher's sighting. Follow-up searches could not relocate the bird, therefore the possible breeding of this species could not be confirmed and remains a mystery. [Terry Mosher's full account of this event will be published in the next issue of *The Kingbird*.]

Great Egrets and Peregrine Falcons are now regular, but still notable nesters at their traditional locations. Another record high number of nestling egrets, 28, was recorded at the Motor Island rookery this year. Peregrine Falcons were successful

again at the downtown Buffalo and Niagara Falls sites.

Atlas work turned up several species north of their expected breeding range in the Region. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers confirmed breeding in Middleport, Orleans County, and Nashville Warblers confirmed breeding in Hartland, Niagara County, are two notable examples. Prairie Warblers were once again found in southern Erie County, farther north than they were found during the previous atlas project.

White-eyed Vireo is considered very rare here in summer and this species has yet to be confirmed in this Region during either Atlas project. The two territorial singing males found at the same location in Westfield back in May continued until at least 23 June. Another bird was found in early June at Iroquois NWR but did not linger.

Clay-colored Sparrows were found in five locations this summer, likely a record number of locations for the Region. Two new breeding locations were found in Cattaraugus County, one at a lilac farm in Ashford and the other in Leon. Kurt Fox found a Clay-colored in Orangeville on 14 June, believed to be the first record for Wyoming County.

There were some notable reports this summer beyond the breeding species. On 26 July, Brett Ewald saw an adult **Great Cormorant** flying in the company of Double-crested Cormorants at Wilson Harbor on Lake Ontario. This report, if documented, will be the first seasonal and third overall record of this species in the Region. The Region's first summer **Cattle Egret** since 1989 was found at a pond in Eden by Don Harris. This species occurred more frequently in the 1970s and has seemingly become more rare with each passing decade. **Eared Grebe** and **American Avocet** are two rarities that are now expected because there have been regular summer sightings. The Eared Grebes were once again at Batavia Waste Water Treatment Plant where the species has been nearly annual since the mid 1990s. Three American Avocets were reported at Bourne's Beach in Westfield on 15 July and three were at Dunkirk Harbor on 22 August. Avocets have now been recorded in Chautauqua County for four consecutive summers.

Shorebirding was very slow this summer, as very little mudflat habitat was noted throughout the Region. Most local birders seeking shorebirds went to Ontario, which also contributed to fewer reports here. It was unusual that no Sanderlings, White-rumped Sandpipers or Short-billed Dowitchers were reported. Besides the avocets, the highlights were a Willet at Times Beach in Buffalo and eight Baird's Sandpipers at Dunkirk Harbor, tying last summer's record high count.

Other highlights for the season included: Canvasback, Northern Goshawk, Sedge Wren, "Lawrence's" Warbler and Prothonotary Warbler.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AISP – Allegany SP CATT; AmSP – Amherst SP ERIE; BeSP – Beaver I SP ERIE; BWWTWP – Batavia Waste Water Treatment Plant GENE; DH – Dunkirk Harbor CHAU; FMCSPP – Four Mile Creek SP NIAG; GHSP – Golden Hill SP NIAG; INWR – Iroquois NWR GENE/ORLE; NF – Niagara Falls NIAG; NR – Niagara R; OOWMA – Oak Orchard WMA GENE; Tift NP – Tift Nature Preserve, Buffalo ERIE; TWMA – Tonawanda WMA GENE/NIAG; WoBSP – Woodlawn Beach SP ERIE.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Mute Swan: no reports; up to 14 ad 30 Aug on L Erie just west of NR in Ontario; still uncommon in Reg.

Gadwall: 2 BWWTWP 9 Aug, only report.

Am. Wigeon: 2 BWWTWP 9 Aug; 5 INWR 16 Aug; only reports.

Am. Black Duck: ad, 5 imm Hartland NIAG 17 Jul; few confirmed during current atlas project; 4 BWWTWP 24 Aug.

Blue-winged Teal: arr 7 BWWTWP 9 Aug.

N. Shoveler: BWWTWP 20 Jul; max 57 BWWTWP 24 Aug, good count for summer; 2 Tift NP 30 Aug.

N. Pintail: 4 BWWTWP 24 Aug, only report.

Green-winged Teal: BWWTWP 9 Aug; 2 Machias CATT 23 Aug; Tift NP 28 Aug; only reports.

Canvasback: 1, 2 BWWTWP 21 Jul, 22 Aug (WW!, DH), 3rd consecutive summer at this location.

Redhead: BWWTWP 22, 24 Aug; only report away from INWR.

Ring-necked Duck: BWWTWP 20 Jul, 21 Aug (WW), nearly annual in summer at this location.

Bufflehead: 6 Amity L ALLE 28 Jul, unusual in summer.

Com. Merganser: Wethersfield WYOM 14 Jun (KF), good atlas find; 5 NF 8 Jul.

Ruddy Duck: 179, 205, 251 BWWTWP 20

Jul, 9, 24 Aug, higher counts than previous summers at this location; TWMA 24 Aug.

Com. Loon: Alfred ALLE 7 Jun (EB); GHSP 23 Jun (NS); unusual in summer.

Pied-billed Grebe: Amity L ALLE 2 Jul (VP), uncommon breeder in ALLE.

EARED GREBE: 1, 2 BWWTWP 22, 24 Aug (DH, WW!), 4th straight summer and nearly annual since mid 1990s at this location.

GREAT CORMORANT: ad Wilson NIAG 26 Jul (BE); 1st seasonal report, only 3rd overall for Reg.

Double-crested Cormorant: 158, 51 nests, 18 yg Motor I NR 23 Jun (WW); max 1090 Buffalo Harbor ERIE 18 Jul.

Am. Bittern: Kiantone CHAU 2 Jun (BK), only report away from INWR area; max 3 INWR 6 Jun; 2 TWMA 29 Jun.

Least Bittern: Tift NP 17 Jun (RA); max 6 TWMA 29 Jun (PY).

Great Egret: 9 ad, 28 yg Motor I NR 16 Jun (WW); Lancaster, Newstead ERIE 29 Jun; max 38, 42 TWMA 31 Jul, 9 Aug (WW); 1-3 Tift NP 1-31 Aug.

CATTLE EGRET: Eden ERIE 19, 20 Jun (DH, RA!), 1st summer report since 1989.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: 6 INWR 4 Jul; Lancaster ERIE 4 Jul; only reports away from NR.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: Tift NP 5 Jun; Somerset NIAG 8 Jun; 3 Ripley CHAU 6 Jun; Medina ORLE 18 Jun; Ridgeway ORLE 20 Jun; New Hudson ALLE 24 Jun; 3 nests with yg AISP 1-3 Jul; Amity L ALLE 11 Jul, 11 Aug; 3 yg TWMA 31 Jul thru; Tift NP 27 Aug; Dunkirk CHAU 30 Aug.

Bald Eagle: imm Yates ORLE 8 Jun; Tift NP 14 Jun (RA); 2 ad, imm TWMA 16 Jun; Amity L ALLE 21, 23 Jun (VP); ad, 2 ad Machias CATT 22 Jun, 23 Aug (MD); 2 ad, yg Westfield CHAU 2-30 Jul (LD), possible new breeding location; ad, 3 imm INWR 20 Jul; imm Ellicottville CATT 21 Aug; imm Williamsville ERIE 27 Aug; imm Irving ERIE 31 Aug; continued increase in reports.

N. Goshawk: French Creek CHAU 1 Jun (JB), only report.

Broad-winged Hawk: 30 Somerset NIAG 8 Jun, late migrants.

Merlin: Buffalo ERIE 11 Jun (BK); 1-3 Buffalo ERIE 23 Jul-24 Aug (PY!), possible breeders; arr NF 31 Aug (WD!).

Peregrine Falcon: 3 fl Buffalo ERIE (BB), adults downtown Buffalo thru; 2 imm NF 3 Jul (BB).

Virginia Rail: 9 Machias CATT 26 Jun, good count for location; Amherst ERIE 15 Jul; only reports away from INWR.

Sora: Lockport NIAG 14 Jun (WW); Hartland NIAG 14 Jun (WD, BP); max 4 TWMA 15 Jun; 2 Amherst ERIE 22 Jun (JP); Watts Flats WMA CHAU 3 Aug (JB); good atlas finds.

SANDHILL CRANE: 3 INWR 4 Jun (PHi), 2 seen by refuge staff thru; possible prelude to future breeding?

Black-bellied Plover: BWWT 24 Aug, only report.

Semipalmated Plover: 2 INWR 6 Jun, late spring migrants; arr Times Beach ERIE 27 Jul.

AM. AVOCET: 3 Westfield CHAU 15 Jul (J&SS); 3 DH 22 Aug (JG), nearly annual at this location in recent summers; NYSARC reports still encouraged.

Greater Yellowlegs: arr Wheatfield NIAG 11 Jul.

Lesser Yellowlegs: arr 2 INWR 1 Jul; max 32 BWWT 24 Aug.

Solitary Sandpiper: Eden ERIE 1 Jun (RA), late migrant; arr Wheatfield NIAG 2 Jul (WD!), early.

Willet: Times Beach ERIE 23 Aug (DS), rarely reported in Reg.

Upland Sandpiper: Shelby ORLE 2 Jun; 2 Orangeville WYOM 3 Jun; 3 Tillman WMA ERIE 5 Jun; Ashford CATT 9 Jun, new atlas find; Buffalo ERIE 16 Aug (PY).

Sanderling: no reports.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 2 French Creek CHAU 7 Jun (JB), late migrants; arr 6 BWWT 9 Aug.

Least Sandpiper: last 4 INWR 6 Jun; arr Wheatfield NIAG 30 Jun.

Baird's Sandpiper: arr 2 DH, BWWT 24 Aug; max 8 DH (BC, TM), matches high count from last summer.

Pectoral Sandpiper: arr 3 BWWT 9 Aug.

Dunlin: last 4 French Creek CHAU 1 Jun (JB).

Stilt Sandpiper: arr Wheatfield NIAG 14 Aug, only report.

Short-billed Dowitcher: no reports.

Wilson's Snipe: Hanging Bog WMA ALLE 2 Jun; 2 Sherman CHAU 13 Jul; max 8 Machias CATT 26 Aug; 6 INWR 31 Aug.

Bonaparte's Gull: max 45 WoBSP 31 Aug.

Caspian Tern: Buffalo NR 2 Jun, breeds nearby in Ontario; Hamburg ERIE 2 Jul; max 12 BeSP 24 Jul; BWWT 9 Aug; INWR 16 Aug.

Forster's Tern: arr 2 DH 24 Aug (TM), only report.

Black Tern: max 9 TWMA 4 Jul.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

N. Saw-whet Owl: 2 New Hudson ALLE 2 Jun (BK, DH), rarely reported in summer.

Com. Nighthawk: 2, 2 Buffalo ERIE 3 Jun, 21 Jul, likely breeders; 2 Amherst ERIE 20 Aug; Tonawanda ERIE 23 Aug; 2 Lockport NIAG 25 Aug; 6 NF 28 Aug; max 15 Williamsville ERIE 28 Aug.

Red-headed Woodpecker: INWR 2 Jun; Hartland NIAG 22 Jun; 2 locations CATT Jun (RR); good atlas finds.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Middleport ORLE 17 Jun, confirmed breeder, much north of typical range.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: French Creek CHAU 8 Jun (JB), late migrant.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Hartland NIAG 7 Jun (WD, BP), late migrant; arr BWWTP 24 Aug (WW).

Acadian Flycatcher: Alma ALLE 2 Jun (BK); 3 Attica WYOM 3 Jun (KF); 3 Wethersfield WYOM 14 Jun (KF); INWR 19 Jun (DaB); French Creek CHAU 13 Jul (JB); max 5 AISP 20 Jul (PY).

W. KINGBIRD: Portland CHAU 28 Jun (TM! NYSARC, DM ph), very rare; anecdotal evidence of possible breeding; *intro*.

White-eyed Vireo: INWR 4, 6 Jun (PD, BK); 2 Westfield CHAU thru 23 Jun (WD), same location as May report.

Yellow-throated Vireo: Batavia GENE 8 Jun; Cambria NIAG 14, 26 Jun; Westfield CHAU 15 Jun (WD); Ridgeway ORLE 20 Jun; Darien GENE 25 Jun; some unusual locations.

Philadelphia Vireo: arr AmSP 29 Aug; FMCSF 31 Aug.

Com. Raven: no reports away from ALLE, CATT.

Cliff Swallow: 3 Peace Bridge ERIE 8 Jun; 40 ad, 52 nests, 18 yg N Tonawanda NIAG 23 Jun; imm Tift NP 7 Jul; continues increase along Buffalo waterfront and NR.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Hartland NIAG 7 Jun, uncommon breeder in NIAG.

Carolina Wren: Eggertsville ERIE 16-21 Jun; reported from 3 other traditional

locations.

SEDGE WREN: 2, 1 INWR 6, 20 Jun (WW! MM! mob); reported at 1 other INWR location (PHi).

Gray-cheeked Thrush: last Buffalo ERIE 5 Jun.

Swainson's Thrush: Alma ALLE 2 Jun; last 3, 1 Tonawanda ERIE 5, 10 Jun; AISP 2, 20 Jul (PFH, PY).

N. Mockingbird: Amherst ERIE 5 Jun; French Creek CHAU 7 Jun; Hartland NIAG 8 Jun; E Bethany GENE 8 Jun; Tonawanda ERIE 10-31 Jul; Williamsville ERIE 29 Jul; max 10 Artpark NIAG 10 Aug; uncommon breeder away from NIAG.

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WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: INWR 2 Jun; Oakfield GENE 2 Jun; OOWMA 15 Jun; Amherst ERIE 15 Jul (JP); 2, 1 Hartland NIAG 17 Jun, 28 Aug (WW); fewer reports than hybrids again.

"Brewster's" Warbler: 2 TWMA 6 Jun (PY); Hartland NIAG 7, 22 Jun (BP, WD); Batavia GENE 8 Jun (BK); OOWMA 15 Jun (PY); INWR 20 Jun (MM); Cambria NIAG 14 Jul (DR); increasing reports.

"Lawrence's" Warbler: TWMA 6 Jun (WW), only report.

Tennessee Warbler: arr Pomfret CHAU 19 Aug.

Nashville Warbler: 3 ALLE (BK); 2 Hartland NIAG 22 Jun (BP, WD), first evidence of breeding in NIAG; Machias CATT 6 Jul; arr 2 Franklinville CATT 17 Aug. **N. Parula:** Genesee ALLE 2 Jun (BK, DH); ad, imm AISP 20 Jul (PY); rare breeder in Reg.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr NF 25 Aug.

Magnolia Warbler: arr Tift NP 28 Aug.

Cape May Warbler: arr Tift NP 28 Aug.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr NF 25 Aug.

Black-throated Green Warbler: arr AmSP 29 Aug.

Blackburnian Warbler: arr AmSP 27 Aug.

Pine Warbler: Genesee ALLE 2 Jun (BK); nested at 2 locations Elma ERIE Jun (DaB); AISP 7 Jul (PFH); only breeding season reports this year.

Prairie Warbler: New Hudson ALLE 2 Jun; 3 Andover ALLE thru Jul (EB); 2, 1 Wales ERIE 7, 15 Jun (MM!), at northern limit of range; Alfred ALLE 17 Jun, 8 Jul; Birdsall ALLE 26 Jun; 6 Ashford CATT 22 Jun (PY).

Bay-breasted Warbler: arr NF 25 Aug.

Blackpoll Warbler: last French Creek CATT 7 Jun; arr AmSP 29 Aug.

Cerulean Warbler: 4 Yates ORLE 8 Jun (WW); Wethersfield WYOM 14 Jun (KF); Hartland NIAG 17 Jun (WW); uncommon breeder away from INWR and Allegany R.

Prothonotary Warbler: max 3 TWMA thru 29 Jun (mob), historical breeding location.

N. Waterthrush: Hartland NIAG 1 Jun; Wethersfield WYOM 14 Jun; uncommon breeder away from INWR.

Louisiana Waterthrush: Genesee ALLE 2 Jun; 3 Wethersfield WYOM 14 Jun; Colden ERIE 15 Jun; AISP 30 Jun.

Wilson's Warbler: arr AmSP 26 Aug.

Canada Warbler: arr AmSP 26 Aug.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW: 1-2

Andover ALLE thru 19 Jul (EB); 2

Ashford CATT 9 Jun (BK!), new location; Orangeville WYOM 14 Jun (KF!), 1st WYOM record; 5 Yorkshire CATT 26 Jun (DaB); Leon CATT 26 Jun (RR), new location.

Vesper Sparrow: 2 Andover ALLE thru Jun; Hartland NIAG 7, 8 Jun; Newfane NIAG 8 Jun; Yates ORLE 8 Jun; only reports.

Grasshopper Sparrow: Andover ALLE thru Jun; 2 Tillman WMA ERIE 5 Jun; 3 Hartland NIAG 17 Jun; 2 Pomfret CHAU 15 Jun; 2 E Bethany GENE 29 Jun; only reports.

Henslow's Sparrow: 5 Lancaster ERIE 2 Jun; 3 Grove ALLE 26 Jun (EB); only reports.

Orchard Oriole: Hartland NIAG 14 Jun (WD, BP); Ripley CHAU 15 Jun (WD!); 2 French Creek CHAU 15 Jun (JB); good atlas finds.

Red Crossbill: W Almond ALLE 2 Jun (BK, DH), only report.

REGION 2 – GENESEE

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We started the season off with the cool of May continuing on into June, with an average temperature that was 1.1 F below normal at 64.7. The month even saw a low of 41 on 2 June. Total precipitation was a mere 2.23", which was 1.13" below normal. The bulk of that total fell during the first half of the month. July saw an average temperature of 70.6, which was about as close to the norm of 70.7 as you can get. Yet it was still not your typical month, with a warm week at the beginning and cool temperatures during the remainder of the month. Sunshine was limited. Precipitation was also just about normal, with a total only 0.67" below normal at

2.26". Rain was frequent but light. August panned out as generally warm and a tad wet. The average temperature of 70.7 was 1.8 above normal. The precipitation was 0.61" above normal with a total of 3.37". The bulk of the precipitation fell during a 12-day period at the beginning of the month. Things dried out considerably after that, with many sunny days.

June was indeed an interesting month. Due to the cold and wet conditions at the end of May, a flurry of activity occurred in early June. This was particularly true for shorebirds and the traditionally later arriving passerines. [This was actually more a reporting phenomenon than a special migration event. The burst of shorebirds and the passage of late migrants for ten days or more into June is annual. This year, because of the poor conditions for much of May, people simply stayed with the hawkwatch and Braddock Bay Bird Observatory banding longer and recorded these birds instead of quitting on 1 June. *RREd*.] Reports from both the Braddock Bay Hawkwatch and the Kaiser-Manitou Beach banding station reflected this also. Some migrant passerines, particularly flycatchers, thrushes and warblers, were noted early in the month. Some special Regional highlights also occurred in June. The Region's first and the state's second MacGillivray's Warbler was banded at the Kaiser-Manitou Beach station. This was followed by the first confirmation of Sandhill Crane breeding in the state.

Breeding Bird Atlas work contributed to the data for the season. Pluses included Trumpeter Swan, Cooper's Hawk, Indigo Bunting and Hooded Warbler. Numerically on the plus side, but really negatives, were the continued highly successful Mute Swans and Canada Geese. On the down side was Blue-winged Teal, which seems to be dropping in numbers each year. There seemed to be a few more reports of Northern Goshawk this year. The Peregrine Falcon nest on the Kodak Tower produced five young this year, but at least one perished. Many observers noted a lack of Common Moorhens in the marshes along the lake, and there were fewer reports of rails. Black Tern went unreported as a breeder and simple sightings were few. As has been the case in recent years, Common Nighthawk and Whip-poor-will were poorly reported. The report of six Common Ravens from three sites in Livingston County was another plus, as we continue to monitor the increase of sightings in the Region. Blue-winged Warblers continued their increase, yet this is associated with the decline of Golden-winged as the habitat changes and becomes less desirable for the latter and interbreeding swamps them. The August Connecticut Warbler banded at the Kaiser-Manitou Beach station was a highlight. An unprecedented number of breeding pairs of Clay-colored Sparrows was noted. Grassland sparrows were also noted for their scarcity, with it an especially poor year for Henslow's Sparrow.

The lakewatch at Hamlin Beach was carried out during most of the season and was responsible for the bulk of the waterbird and shorebird reports. On the whole, it was a generally lackluster season. Common Loons were reported throughout and a smattering of grebes and lingering waterfowl passed the watch. Most shorebird reports came from that location, as habitat was limited anywhere in the Region.

June's species total was 187. That was above the ten-year average by nearly ten species, but the yearly total still lagged behind at 258. July's total was above the ten-

year average with 164 species. With three new for the year, that total reached 261. This was well behind last year's end of July total of 281. August was significantly below the ten-year average of 176.6 species at a paltry 139. One new species during August brought the yearly total to 262.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BB – Braddock Bay MONR; CA – Canadice LIVI; CH – Charlotte/Ontario Beach MONR; CU – Cuylerville LIVI; G – Greece MONR; GE – Geneseo LIVI; HB – Hamlin Beach SP MONR; HL – Honeoye L LIVI; IC – Island Cottage Woods, T Greece MONR; M – Manitou MONR; P – Parma MONR; PN – Perinton MONR.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Brant: arr 17 HB 1 Jun.

Trumpeter Swan: 1 on nest WAYN all Jun (very near MONR line).

Gadwall: max 10 HB 29 Jul, high for date.

Am. Wigeon: HB 7 Jul; max 4 HB 28 Jul.

N. Pintail: arr 4 HB 24 Aug.

Green-winged Teal: 2 HB 16 Jun; 2 CU 28 Jun; HB 28 Jul; max 130 HB 24 Aug.

Lesser Scaup: 2 Irondequoit Bay 17 Jun.

White-winged Scoter: arr 2 HB 12 Aug.

Long-tailed Duck: 5 HB 3 Jun; f HB 20 Jul.

Bufflehead: f HB 19 Jul.

Com. Goldeneye: imm m HB 1 Jun.

N. Bobwhite: Byron 5 Jun, probable escapee; P 16-30 Jun, probably escaped or released.

Red-throated Loon: 2 HB 1 Jun (WS); 1 HB 16 Jun (WS); out of season.

Com. Loon: 1-10 HB all Jun; 1-6 HB all Jul.

Horned Grebe: arr HB 30 Aug.

Red-necked Grebe: 11 HB 30 Aug.

Least Bittern: arr 3 Hamlin 26 Jun (RS), very late for first report.

TRICOLORED HERON: G 17 Jun (KG), rare.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: 10 BB 9 Jun (CC), good number so late.

Bald Eagle: max 8 (2 ad, 5 imm) BB 6 Jun; 7 HL 8 Jul.

N. Goshawk: Letchworth SP 1 Jun, defending nest site.

Red-shouldered Hawk: juvenile CA 16 Jul; declining as a breeder.

Merlin: HB 29 Jul.

SANDHILL CRANE: 2 ad, 1 fledgling Savannah WAYN (JVN, JF); first NYS confirmed breeding.

Black-bellied Plover: arr 2 HB 22 Jul (WS), record early.

Semipalmated Plover: arr HB 1 Jul (WS), record early.

Lesser Yellowlegs: arr HB 29 Jun.

Solitary Sandpiper: arr 2 CU 28 Jul.

Upland Sandpiper: max 10 GE 18 Aug (JK).

Whimbrel: arr HB 11 Jul; HB 21 Jul, 25 Jul, 4 Aug, 31 Aug.

Ruddy Turnstone: max 119 HB 1 Jun, very good total; arr 5 CH 29 Jul.

Sanderling: arr 2 HB 11 Jul.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: arr 2 CH 11 Jul.

Least Sandpiper: arr 2 HB 29 Jun.

Baird's Sandpiper: arr 2 CH 29 Jul.

White-rumped Sandpiper: last 2 HB 1 Jun.

Pectoral Sandpiper: arr HB 29 Jun.

Dunlin: max 390 HB 1 Jun; arr juv HB 29-31 Aug, plumage not normally seen this far south.

Stilt Sandpiper: HB 27 Jul, alternate plumage.

Short-billed Dowitcher (*L.g. griseus*): PN 1-3 Jun (DS).

jaeger sp: HB 18 Aug.

Laughing Gull: ad HB 2 Jul (BE).

Little Gull: ad Hamlin 28 Jul.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: sub-ad HB 1,4 Jun.

Black Tern: ad BB 1 Aug.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Com. Nighthawk: max 12 G 2 Jun, low total; P last half Jun.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: last M 3 Jun.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: max 16 M 7 Jun, banded; arr M 18 Aug, banded.

“Traill’s” Flycatcher: max 27 M 7 Jun, banded.

Philadelphia Vireo: last M 7 Jun, banded.

Com. Raven: 6 LIVI 3 sites 1-30 Jun (JK); HL 23 Jul; BB 16 Aug.

Carolina Wren: max 14 T Naples 26 Jul.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: last M 3 Jun, late.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: last 9 M 7 Jun, banded.

Swainson’s Thrush: last M 8 Jun, banded.

WARBLERS

Tennessee Warbler: last 2 M 6 Jun.

N. Parula: last IC 5 Jun.

Blackpoll Warbler: CA 8 Jun; m Webster 24 Jun, extremely late.

Worm-eating Warbler: last IC 5 Jun (KG).

Connecticut Warbler: arr M 27 Aug, banded.

MACGILLIVRAY’S WARBLER: M 4 Jun (CM), banded, ph; 1st Regional, 2nd NYS.

Wilson’s Warbler: arr M 26 Aug, banded.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Clay-colored Sparrow: 1-2 P 20 Jun, 13 Jul (BE); 2 PN 22-30 Jun (MP, DS); 2 PT 28-30 Jun, 1-6 Jul (MT, TL); 2, 3 Warsaw WYOM 29 Jun, 14 Jul (JK), 2 Pittsford Jun-Jul MONR; unprecedented numbers.

Savannah Sparrow: max 150 GE 21 Aug.

Henslow’s Sparrow: Mendon Ponds MONR 24-30 Jun, first report for year.

White-throated Sparrow: 1 singing Bergen Swamp GENE 28 Jun.

Dark-eyed Junco: juv M 18 Aug, banded.

REGION 3 – FINGER LAKES

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Temperatures in Ithaca were 1.3 F cooler than normal in June, exactly normal in July and 2.0 warmer than normal in August. Precipitation was above normal in all three months in Ithaca, but above normal only in July in Elmira. July precipitation was nearly twice normal.

While we hope to discover some things about bird populations from data provided by birders, it should be noted that data can be affected by variations in how and where the Region's birders acquire data and how faithfully they report them. More than the usual amount of data for this season came from Breeding Bird Atlas efforts in Seneca and Steuben counties. Birders in Chemung County were less active than usual, at least in their own county. The Ithaca June Count was successfully compiled this year. Totals from the count were unavailable last year. I have made no comparison of this year's locally breeding bird population indicators to previous years' numbers. However, I have made the usual comparisons for transient species, for species affected little by the Ithaca June Count, such as those occurring in marsh habitat, and for species whose late summer flocking behaviors produce such large numbers that the Ithaca June Count numbers for those species become relatively insignificant.

Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge was the source of most of the waterbird data for the season. Numbers reported for goose and duck species were generally stable or up from last year. One might surmise that the "good duck weather" of the rainy summer really was good for the ducks. Unusual in summer was a Eurasian Wigeon that Carol and Joe Slattery found at Montezuma 28 August. A Greater Scaup was also there 4 June. One Red-breasted Merganser was found on the Ithaca June Count and three were at Aurora Bay in early June. Allison and Jeff Wells and maybe their baby, Evan, spotted the only flock of Brant reported as it was migrating north 1 June. In spite of a nine-year low single-site maximum for Ruffed Grouse, the total number for the Region was statistically unchanged.

Common Loons were not reported last year, but made several appearances this year. Horned Grebes were also back on Seneca Lake. Double-crested Cormorant numbers were stable for the second consecutive year. American Bittern and Black-crowned Night-Heron both had nine-year single-site highs, but only Great Blue Heron showed a significant increase Region-wide.

Jesse Ellis's sighting of a Merlin in mid-June in Dryden supported the notion that the species is expanding its breeding range southward. Jeff Holbrook, who discovered Steuben County's first Bald Eagle nest last summer, observed the county's first fledgling Bald Eagle this summer. John and Sue Gregoire reported seeing an immature Golden Eagle in late August over their banding operation in Hector and also reported the first nesting of Osprey in Queen Catharine Marsh, south of Seneca Lake.

Single Sandhill Cranes were seen at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge on at least two occasions in August. Coots and moorhens were in good numbers at Montezuma.

Most sandpiper species showed little change in numbers from last year. Baird's Sandpipers were unusually numerous and peaked at Montezuma with 22 on 26 August. Highlight species were Willet on the northward migration and Western Sandpiper on the southward migration. Red-necked Phalarope also made a couple of appearances in late August.

Contrary to my predictions about the effect of vegetation growing on the new Ring-billed Gull colony site in the Chemung River in downtown Elmira, the gulls returned to the gravel pile and seemed to prefer the vegetated portions. The vegetation grew on the top of the pile where it was out of reach of the eroding rain-swollen river. The first birds to return took the vegetated high spots. Later nesters took lower graveled sites where they were more exposed to the fluctuating level of the river. About 500 pairs occupied the small island and 222 young of all ages were counted on just one side of the island. The most unusual gull of the season was a Laughing Gull at Myers Point, Tompkins County, in mid-June. Caspian Tern numbers were down significantly for the second consecutive summer.

Numbers for both cuckoo species seemed very good this summer. Both showed significant increases over last year. While the Black-billed's increase may simply be the result of the return of the Ithaca June Count report, Yellow-billed's increase was certainly supported by Region-wide numbers. Abundant eastern tent caterpillars were probably one factor influencing the increase. Common Nighthawks were still migrating in early June. Their numbers for the entire season were down significantly for the second consecutive year. Whip-poor-wills failed to return to Addison for the first time in anyone's memory there. The species was not reported anywhere in the Region.

Geo Kloppel reported a not quite pure Golden-winged Warbler on territory in West Danby in early June. A Yellow-breasted Chat was singing in mid-June at the Dorothy McIlroy Preserve. At least two Clay-colored Sparrows were on territory in Tompkins County and another in Chemung County. The only Henslow's Sparrows reported were at a single colony near Jasper. A White-crowned Sparrow lingered in Slaterville Springs through 1 June. A Pine Siskin appeared in a yard in Ithaca in mid-summer.

Fall banding activities at Kestrel Haven Avian Migration Observatory in Hector began 4 July when the first migrant Yellow Warblers were noted. From then through the end of the season, John and Sue Gregoire banded 1457 individuals of 72 species, including their first Belted Kingfisher and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in 18 years of banding.

The following species listing includes comparisons of observed bird populations in the Region between summer 2002 and summer 2003. A "+" at the end of the species account indicates an increase; a "-" indicates a decrease. Accounts with neither symbol indicate that the species either did not demonstrate a significant change in reported numbers or the change was a decrease caused by the lack of Ithaca June Count data in 2002. Unless otherwise noted, the cited comparisons

showed statistically significant changes ($X^2 > 3.84$; $P = 0.05$). A discussion of my methodology and its limitations can be found in the Region 3 report in the December 1999 issue of *The Kingbird* Vol. 49 No. 4.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CP – City Pier ONTA; IJC – Ithaca June Count; KH – Kestrel Haven Avian Migration Observatory, Hector SCHU; MNWR – Montezuma NWR; MyPt – Myers Pt TOMP; StP – Stewart P TOMP.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Brant: 60 Union Springs 1 Jun (A&JW), only report, +.

Mute Swan: MNWR 4 Jun (JMc, BP), only report.

EURASIAN WIGEON: MNWR 28 Aug (C&JSI).

Am. Wigeon: max 9 MNWR 29 Jun, +.

Am. Black Duck: max 6 MNWR 17 Jul, +.

N. Pintail: max & arr 5 MNWR 28 Aug (GP), only report, +.

Canvasback: 19 MNWR 26 Jul (KGr), only report, high, +.

Redhead: max 18 MNWR 15 Jun (BG), high, +.

Ring-necked Duck: 3 MNWR 4 Jun (JMc, BP), only report.
GREATER SCAUP: MNWR 4 Jun (JMc, BP), only report.
Hooded Merganser: max 9 IJC 18 Jun, +.
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER: IJC 18 Jun (CaBC); max 3 Aurora Bay 4 & 10 Jun (JMc, BP), +.
Ruddy Duck: max 12 MNWR 8 Jun, high.
Ruffed Grouse: max 5 Von Engeln Preserve TOMP 20 Jul (A&JW), low.
Com. Loon: StP 4 Jun; Long Pt SP 13 Jun; max 2 Carpenters Pt CAYU 11 Jul, +.
Horned Grebe: 2 Seneca L SP 20 Jul (FB), only report.
Double-crested Cormorant: max 36 StP 23 Aug.
Am. Bittern: max 5 MNWR 4 Jun (JMc, BP), high.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: arr MNWR 29 Jun; max 16 MNWR 30 Aug (CT), high.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: Cass P TOMP 5 Jun; max 12 MNWR 29 Jun (KGr), high, +.
Bald Eagle: Dryden L Trail TOMP 22 Jun; max 4 MNWR 13 Jul, +.
N. Harrier: max 3 Finger Lakes National Forest 1 Aug, +.
GOLDEN EAGLE: KH 26 Aug.
Am. Kestrel: 16 IJC 18 Jun, high.
Merlin: IJC 18 Jun; arr MNWR 24 Aug.
Peregrine Falcon: arr MNWR 19 Jul (JMo), early.
Com. Moorhen: max 18 MNWR 26 Jul, +.
Am. Coot: max 75 MNWR 13 Jul, +.
SANDHILL CRANE: MNWR 4 Aug; MNWR 24 Aug (MH).
Black-bellied Plover: last CP 11 Jun; max 2 MyPt 10 Jun; arr MNWR 10 Aug.
Am. Golden-Plover: arr 2 MNWR 10 Aug, early; max 7 MNWR 27 Aug, +.
Semipalmated Plover: last 6 MyPt 1 Jun; arr 2 MNWR 10 Jul (GP), early;

max 30 MNWR 25 Aug, +.
Killdeer: max 51 IJC 18 Jun, low, -.
Greater Yellowlegs: arr 4 MNWR 29 Jun; max 24 MNWR 4 Aug.
Lesser Yellowlegs: arr 9 MNWR 28 Jun; max 40 MNWR 15 Jul.
Solitary Sandpiper: arr MNWR 5 Jul; max 9 MNWR 15 Jul.
WILLET: MyPt 4 Jun (JMc, BP!).
Spotted Sandpiper: max 8 MNWR 6 Jul, low.
Upland Sandpiper: max 15 Seneca Farm Days Fairgrounds SENE 19 Jul (J&KMc), high.
Sanderling: arr & max 6 MyPt 23 Jul.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: last 4 MNWR 10 Jun; arr MNWR 10 Jul; max 80 MNWR 28 Aug, +.
W. SANDPIPER: arr Montezuma Wetlands Complex 27 Jul (GB, TB, GP).
Least Sandpiper: arr 10 MNWR 1 Jul; max 101 MNWR 6 Jul.
White-rumped Sandpiper: arr MNWR 24 Aug; max 2 MNWR 30 Aug.
Baird's Sandpiper: arr MNWR 23 Aug, late; max 22 MNWR 26 Aug (CSa), high, +.
Pectoral Sandpiper: arr MNWR 15 Jul; max 50 MNWR 28 Aug, +.
Dunlin: last MyPt 1 Jun; max 6 CP 1 Jun (LD BG JuHo CJ LL), high; arr 5 MNWR 16 Aug (St&SuF), early, +.
Stilt Sandpiper: arr MNWR 13 Jul (Rochester RBA), early; max 4 MNWR 26 Aug.
Short-billed Dowitcher: arr 2 MNWR 7 Jul; max 10 MNWR 16 Jul.
Wilson's Snipe: max 2 MNWR 7 Jul, -.
Am. Woodcock: IJC 18 Jun, -.
Wilson's Phalarope: 2 MNWR 23 Aug (WHO), only report.
RED-NECKED PHALAROPE: MNWR 26 Aug (G&KR CSa); MNWR 30 Aug (CT).
LAUGHING GULL: MyPt 14 Jun (MA!).
Bonaparte's Gull: last MyPt 5 Jun; arr MyPt 18 Jul; max 3 MNWR 26 Aug (MDe), high.

Ring-billed Gull: max several hundred MNWR 25 Aug, -.

Herring Gull: max 8 MNWR 13 Jul, -.

Great Black-backed Gull: last 2 IJC 18 Jun; arr 2 Treman Marina SP 14 Jul; max 6 StP 23 Aug.

Caspian Tern: arr 2 MNWR 13 Jul; max 26 MyPt 8 Aug, -.

Com. Tern: arr 2 MNWR 26 Jul; max 4 MNWR 23 Aug.

Forster's Tern: max 3 MyPt 4 Jun (KR), high; last 2 CP 11 Jun; arr Hog Hole TOMP 31 Aug, +.

Black Tern: max 25 MNWR 10 Jun.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: 20 IJC 18 Jun, high.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 10 IJC 18 Jun, high.

Barred Owl: 3 IJC 18 Jun, -.

N. Saw-whet Owl: Farleys Pt CAYU 20 Jul (DS), only report.

Com. Nighthawk: max 9 Botchers Landing CHEM 3 Jun; Ithaca 25 Jun; arr 3 Dryden 12 Aug (AF, MF), early, -.

Chimney Swift: max 60 Riverfront P CHEM 26 Aug, -.

Belted Kingfisher: 11 IJC 18 Jun, low.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Farleys Pt CAYU 12 Jul; max 2 Seneca Army Depot SENE 31 Jul.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: 36 IJC 18 Jun, low.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Dryden L Trail TOMP 17 Aug (StF), only report.

Acadian Flycatcher: max 3 Fillmore Glen SP 15 Jun; last KH 19 Aug.

Great Crested Flycatcher: 58 IJC 18 Jun, low.

Blue-headed Vireo: 31 IJC 18 Jun, low.

Philadelphia Vireo: last & max 2 Bayberry Program Center SENE 2 Jun (BG), late; arr Sapsucker Woods TOMP 19 Aug (AW), early.

Am. Crow: 627 IJC 18 Jun, low.

Fish Crow: max 10 StP 23 Aug (J&KMc), high.

Com. Raven: max 5 Woodhull Raceway STEU 13 Jun, -.

N. Rough-winged Swallow: 24 IJC 18 Jun, -.

Cliff Swallow: max 18 Botchers Landing CHEM 3 Jun, -.

House Wren: 134 IJC 18 Jun, low.

Veery: 187 IJC 18 Jun, low.

Wood Thrush: 115 IJC 18 Jun, low.

Gray Catbird: 434 IJC 18 Jun, low.

European Starling: max 2600 MNWR 17 Jul (SK, KR), high, -.

Cedar Waxwing: 580 IJC 18 Jun (CaBC), high.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: 44 IJC 18 Jun, low.

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER: Danby 3 Jun (GK), only report.

"Brewster's" Warbler: KH 24 Aug (J&SGr), only report.

Tennessee Warbler: arr Cornell U 31 Aug (DG), only report.

N. Parula: Ledyard 2 Jun (TL), only report.

Magnolia Warbler: 40 IJC 18 Jun (CaBC), high.

Cape May Warbler: arr KH 26-27 Aug (J&SGr), early, only report.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 21 IJC 18 Jun, low.

Bay-breasted Warbler: arr Cornell U 28 Aug.

Blackpoll Warbler: max 4 Caroline 2 Jun (SK), high; last Ashland 6 Jun; arr StP 24 Aug (KR), early.

Cerulean Warbler: max 2 Owasco Flats CAYU 13 Jun.

Black-and-white Warbler: 7 IJC 18 Jun, low.

Am. Redstart: 125 IJC 18 Jun, low.

Ovenbird: 245 IJC 18 Jun, low.

N. Waterthrush: 5 IJC 18 Jun, low.

Louisiana Waterthrush: many Fillmore Glen SP 13 Jun; last Kirk Rd Bridge

TOMP 26 Aug, late (A&JW).

Wilson's Warbler: arr Community
Corners TOMP 25 Aug; max 2 KH 30
Aug.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT: Mellroy
Preserve CAYU 13-14 Jun (JSi, MY).

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: 58 IJC 18 Jun, low.

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW:

Newfield 15 Jun (JE); 2 IJC 18 Jun; last
Slaterville Springs 1 Jul (JY).

Savannah Sparrow: 154 IJC 18 Jun, low.

Grasshopper Sparrow: max 45 Ovid 15
Jul (JMc, BP), high.

Henslow's Sparrow: 9 Jasper 30 Jun-26
Jul.

Song Sparrow: 771 IJC 18 Jun, low.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW:
Slaterville Springs 1 Jun (TJ!).

Bobolink: max 600 Caroline 28 Aug
(StF), high.

Red-winged Blackbird: 1087 IJC 18
Jun, low, -.

Orchard Oriole: MyPt 1 Jun; 2 IJC 18
Jun; Willard WMA SENE 5 Jul; several
Sheldrake 15 Jul (JMc, BP), high.

Baltimore Oriole: 132 IJC 18 Jun, low.

House Finch: 112 IJC 18 Jun, low.

PINE SISKIN: Ithaca 14 Jul (L&SJH).

House Sparrow: 297 IJC 18 Jun, low.

REGION 4 – SUSQUEHANNA

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For the most part, the summer was wet and cool. June had an average temperature of 62.7F, 1.2 below normal. There was 4.97" of rain, 1.17" above normal. Fifteen days had precipitation of 0.01" or more, with the largest amount 1.65" on 20 June. Eleven of those days also were days with below average temperatures. In the first half of the month, only four days had above 50% of the available sunshine. July continued the trend, with an average temperature of 68.0, 0.7 below normal, and 4.93" of rain, 1.44" above normal. August reversed the situation with an average of 68.9, 2.3 above normal, and 2.15" of precipitation, 1.20" below normal.

The cool wet period had mixed benefits for breeding activities. Mixed flocks of Wild Turkey hens and young seen in the late summer had quite large differences in the size of the immatures, indicating late nesting for one reason or another. Quite possibly, early nests were unsuccessful due to the poor conditions. Farmers were prevented from cutting many of the hay fields until late, which likely benefited some species. That could have been the reason for reports of large numbers of Bobolinks later in the summer. No late frosts in the spring to damage flower buds and ample water to develop during the summer produced an exceptional amount of fruit on trees and vines. Species dependent on fruits during migration and winter survival should do well this year. Tom Salo reported early in the summer that he "noticed a significant number of cones on Norway spruces in some of the state plantations." Most of the Norway spruces in Tioga County were very heavy with

cones by late season and some of the white spruces were also bearing prolifically. As Tom pointed out, we may see crossbills and siskins showing up in the Region later.

Three successful breeding reports were highlights of the summer. One success was documented by Marie Petuh in *The Kingbird* Vol. 53 No. 3. The first confirmed nesting of Merlins outside of the Adirondacks, at a cemetery in Binghamton, produced four fledglings, although one appeared to be lost due to a severe thunderstorm. Bob Donnelly reported, "A male Bald Eagle was fledged about two miles north of Otsego Lake in the Town of Springfield. The mother was a three year old and the father only two. She only had a little white, while he showed none. Yet they were able to pull it off. They used a nest which adults had visited last year, but didn't appear to stay. It makes me wonder if one of this year's parents had been hatched there unnoticed before." John Birkett sent a message about NYSDEC banding an eaglet near Portlandville in southern Otsego County.

An article in a Utica newspaper, claiming that Common Loons nested on Canadarago Lake, Otsego County, spurred investigation. Besides an adult observed by Jo Ann Salo in August, Steve Hall found one in immature plumage on the lake in early September. While there was no evidence of breeding, just having loons on the lake in summer is a good sign, and the lake merits watching in future years.

Bald Eagles were observed in the Region during the summer along the Unadilla River, Susquehanna River and at Chenango Lake. Two – I hesitate to call them a pair – adults were often seen at an abandoned flooded gravel quarry near Nichols in western Tioga County. Motorists crossing a bridge over the Susquehanna in that area were startled by them flying just above the bridge. Hopefully, their numbers will increase so they will be nesting throughout the Region. On a sad note, Don Windsor reported that a small jet airplane killed an adult Bald Eagle on 27 August at Eaton Airport in North Norwich.

Common Nighthawks were observed along streams in the Otsego County area. Tom Salo commented that he was not observing them in historic areas (for him) over villages, but in rural areas. He speculated that the rural nighthawks were doing better than their urban counterparts and maybe more existed than thought.

West Nile Virus is doing its damage to avian species, but little quantitative data exists in the Region for the effect on the American Crow. Subjective assessment of numbers suggests that the population is down, but that can be very inaccurate. However, in compiling the data for his Breeding Bird Survey route, Andy Mason noted that he had 37 American Crows while the average on that route was 73. Combined with the data from other surveyors, a reasonable indication may be determined.

Uncommon species noted were Buffleheads reported in June on the Susquehanna at Bainbridge and Vestal and a Least Bittern found by Tom Salo in the Town of Pittsfield, Otsego County. Swainson's Thrushes were found at two locations, Pharsalia WMA and southern Delaware County. Bob Donnelly reported Hooded Warblers at two locations on Otsego Lake. A Clay-colored Sparrow was observed by Dave McCartt north of Berkshire and a Pine Siskin was found on a

Breeding Bird Survey in East Worcester by Doug Kibbe.

Species noted that seemed to be in less abundance were Brown Creeper and, especially, Eastern Phoebe. Species that seemed to be abundant for some reporters were most waterfowl, Carolina Wren, Brown Thrasher, White-throated Sparrow and Bobolink. The total number of species reported for the season was 162.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AqPk – Aquaterra P BROO; BBS – Breeding Bird Survey; Bing – Binghamton BROO; Be – Berkshire TIOG; BPd – Boland Pd BROO; Col – Colchester DELA; EIPk – Ely P, Binghamton BROO; JC – Johnson City BROO; Na – Nanticoke BROO; OP – Otsiningo P, Binghamton BROO; Ow – Owego TIOG; PWMA – Pharsalia WMA CHEN; Rpk – Roundtop P BROO; Rx – Roxbury DELA; UL – Upper Lisle BROO; Ve – Vestal BROO.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Blue-winged Teal: f Center Lisle 17 Aug (JW); f BPd 24 Aug (JW); only reports.

Green-winged Teal: f OP 24 Aug (JW); f BPd 24 Aug (JW); only reports.

Bufflehead: Bainbridge 4 Jun, late (JB); Ve 10, 25 Jun, late (MP, EC, DWa).

Wild Turkey: max 43 ad & juv Ow 28 Aug (SHu).

Com. Loon: alt plumage Candarago L Aug (JS); Little Pd Col 8 Jun thru, possibly line-entangled (AM).

Pied-billed Grebe: juv OP 24 Aug (JW), only report.

Double-crested Cormorant: max 5 Hillcrest Pits BROO 27 Jul (JW).

Am. Bittern: Ow Jun (C&JB), only report

Least Bittern: T Pittsfield OTSE 21 JUL (TS), only report.

Great Egret: Endwell 11 Jul (DWa), earliest report.

Turkey Vulture: max 25 Na 8 Aug, near landfill; 2 juv still covered with down Greek Pk CORT 3 Aug (DB).

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: EIPk 2 Aug (JW), earliest report.

Bald Eagle: 3 T Springfield (BD); Nichols 12 Aug (JH); Chenango L 25 Aug (DL).

Red-shouldered Hawk: 2 juv T Greene 17 Jul (TS).

MERLIN: 2 ad, 4 juv at nest Bing thru 15 Aug, out of known breeding range (MP, mob).

Virginia Rail: 2 Plainfield OTSE 7 Jun (TS); Greene CHEN 2 Jun (TS).

Com. Moorhen: ad BP 24-31 Aug (MP, JW), only report.

Lesser Yellowlegs: max 8 Rx 24 Aug (AM).

Am. Woodcock: max 9 Harpersfield DELA 5 Aug (AM).

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: Port Crane 4 Jun; BBS 12 Jun; Glen Aubrey 22 Jul; Lisle 17 Aug; Landers Corners CORT 18 Aug; Be Jul-Aug.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Col 7 Jun (AM); Roxbury DELA 5 Jul (AM).

Barred Owl: Apalachin Aug (CW), only report in w half of Reg, but common in e half.

Com. Nighthawk: 2 Davenport 3 Jun (CS); 3 Unadilla R CHEN 7 Jun (TS); Westover BROO 8 & 25 Jun (MP); Aug max 8 JC (M&RD).

Chimney Swift: max 330 St. Ann's Church Bing 17 Aug (BB, MP).

N. Flicker: entire Reg, many reports, numbers high.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Be Aug (DM), only report.

E. Phoebe: BROO; e half of Reg few reports.

E. Kingbird: max 10 Na 20 Aug (JW).

Warbling Vireo: max 5 Port Dickinson P & Ot 6 Jul.

Red-eyed Vireo: max 48 BBS 12 Jun (TS).

Am. Crow: max 37 BBS 12 Jun, low.

Fish Crow: max 4 Chenango Valley SP BROO 3 Aug (JW).

Com. Raven: max 5 Burlington OTSE 6 Jul (TS).

Purple Martin: TIOG Jun & Jul (TBC), only early season report.

Bank Swallow: max 36+ Ve 10 Jun (MP, EC, DWa).

Cliff Swallow: max 12 Chenango Forks 18 Jun (NCBC).

Brown Creeper: Glen Aubrey 14 Jun, only early season report.

Carolina Wren: entire Reg, numbers high.

Winter Wren: 2 PWMA 12 Aug (MP, DWa, EH), only report.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: PWMA in mixed feeding flock 12 Aug (MP, DWa,

EH); UL 23 Aug (DWa, JW); only reports.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: EL 2 Aug (JW); Bing 20 Aug (NCBC); only reports.

Veery: max 12 BBS 12 Jun.

Swainson's Thrush: Col 8 Jun; 3-4 PWMA 27 Jul (MY).

Brown Thrasher: numbers high.

Cedar Waxwing: max 24 BBS 12 Jun.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: f UL 17 Aug (JW), only report.

"Brewster's" Warbler: 2 banded Candor 10 Jul (BP).

"Lawrence's" Warbler: AqPk BROO 26 Aug (DWa), only report.

Nashville Warbler: Col 28 Jun, 3 Jul (AM); El 2 Aug (JW); El 16 Aug (DWa); only reports.

Yellow Warbler: max 31 BBS 12 Jun.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: max 5 BBS 12 Jun.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: max 4 PWMA 12 Aug (MP, DWa, EH).

Black-throated Green Warbler: max 4 PWMA 12 Aug.

Pine Warbler: Rpk 25 Jun (NCBC); RPk 18 Aug (MP); Be Aug (DM).

Prairie Warbler: max 2 Ve 10 Jun (MP, EC, DWa).

American Redstart: max 8 BBS 12 Jun.

Prothonotary Warbler: 2 UL 21 Aug (DWa), only report.

Ovenbird: max 6 JC 1 Jul.

Mourning Warbler: max 11 DELA Jun & Jul (AM); CHEN Jun (DWi); only reports.

Com. Yellowthroat: max 8 JC 31 Aug.

Hooded Warbler: 2 Otsego L (BD), only report.

Wilson's Warbler: AqPk 26 Aug (DWa); m GA 28 Aug (JW); only reports.

Canada Warbler: Rx 14 Jun (AM); Be Jul (DM); UL 17 Aug (JW); only reports.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Clay-colored Sparrow: Be 4-5 Jul (DM), rare.

Bobolink: max 100+ juv Triangle BROO
3 Aug (GK).

E. Meadowlark: max 10+ BROO 30 Jul
(NCBC).

Rusty Blackbird: 12 BPd 28 Aug (MP).

[This would be state record early migrant.
NYSARC report should be submitted.
RREd]

Pine Siskin: BBS E. Worcester (DK),
only report.

REGION 5 – ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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The season started cool, ended warm and was a little drier than average, although areas north of Syracuse received more rainfall than the official statistics. The summer rainfall, coupled with the very wet May, meant that water levels remained high through August. For June the average temperature was 64.6F, 1.2 below normal, with 2.83" precipitation, 0.88" below normal. July's average temperature was 71.2, +0.3, and there was 3.30" precipitation, 0.72" below normal. The August averages were 71.5, 2.5 above normal, with 3.03" precipitation, 0.53" below normal.

The Great Swamp Conservancy land in Madison County was home to several breeding pairs of Blue-winged Teal, a species that is now hard to find elsewhere. Greater Scaup was the only lingering duck, while Ring-necked Duck was seen in northern Herkimer County where they breed. Mallards with young at the end of August probably delayed nesting or lost their first nests because of high water. Gadwall and Northern Shoveler arrived in late August.

Common Loons also seemed to delay nesting, as many recently hatched young were seen after 20 July. There was a report of loons with young at the south end of Skaneateles Lake and, as was the case in 2002, it was unclear as to where they may have nested. Tom Salo provided an interesting report on a Common Loon defending a chick against Bald Eagle predation.

A Black Vulture seen in June may have been an overshoot, but the species continues to expand northward. Bald Eagles breeding at Stillwater Reservoir seem to be the first confirmed record for that area although breeding has been suspected for several years. Atlas workers confirmed breeding for Northern Harrier and Northern Goshawk at several sites. An adult **Golden Eagle** in Brookfield provided the first summer record for this recovering species. Peregrines were reported in Rome and Syracuse, while Merlins in Syracuse raise the possibility that they might be breeding.

Once again, there were few spring shorebird reports for early June as observers turned their attention towards the Atlas project, although a record late Greater Yellowlegs was found while surveying blocks. Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary

Sandpiper and Least Sandpiper all returned the first week of July. Onondaga Lake had numerous shorebirds in mid July and again in late August, but Delta Lake remained full through the summer with no shorebirds. Water levels on both Lake Ontario and Oneida Lake were very high. A Buff-breasted Sandpiper did show up on the last day of the season at a sod farm in Madison County and Baird's Sandpipers were plentiful.

Little Gull and Forster's Tern both made brief appearances at Sandy Pond. There were a significant number of Yellow-billed Cuckoo reports from the lower Tug Hill of Oneida and Oswego Counties. Two Long-eared Owl sightings included a pair of fledglings. The Region's first **Chuck-will's-widow** remained until 2 June. Whip-poor-wills were found at only two sites, but many areas with good habitat are rarely visited any more. Red-headed Woodpecker reports were encouraging and Black-backed Woodpeckers were found in four Atlas blocks, including two near the southern limit of their range.

Purple Martin numbers continue to be low, while Cliff Swallow still occupies much the same range as during the last Atlas, though that may change with the decline of agriculture and barns in the lower Tug Hill. Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee and Rusty Blackbird were all found in appropriate habitats in Herkimer County. There were two Sedge Wrens reported; one almost certainly did not breed.

Somewhat out of range were a Blue-winged Warbler and a Prairie Warbler on territory in the Town of Russia and a Cerulean Warbler in Florence. There was a late breeding confirmation of Tennessee Warbler, and both Magnolia and Black-throated Green warblers were breeding near Lake Ontario where they are unusual. Prothonotary Warbler bred successfully again in Big Bay Swamp. This species deserves more attention once the atlas is finished. Clay-colored Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow and Upland Sandpiper were all confirmed breeding at Griffiss AFB. There were no Henslow's Sparrows reported. The only finches reported for the season were House Finch, Purple Finch and American Goldfinch.

Observers reported that the seed and fruit crop was quite good. Some trees with good production were Norway spruce, white spruce, hemlock, maples and ash. Staghorn sumac, honeysuckle, elderberry, buckthorn, highbush cranberry, grapes and dogwood were all mentioned as heavy with fruit. On the minus side, there were few cones on red or white pines and few birch catkins. Matt Perry said it best: "We seem to be in good shape for sustaining wintering bird populations. Now we'll see if any of them take advantage of it!"

For the season, a total of 198 species was reported, a fairly typical number. Highlights were Black Vulture, Golden Eagle, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Little Gull, Forster's Tern, lingering Chuck-will's-widow, Sedge Wren and breeding Clay-colored Sparrows.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

Adks – Adirondacks; CM – Clay Marsh; CS – Cicero Swamp; DH – Derby Hill; DL – Delta L; GAFB – Griffiss Air Force Base, Rome; GSC – Great Swamp Conservancy, n. MADI; HIWMA – Howland I WMA; OnonL – Onondaga L; SFWS – Spring Farm Wildlife Sanctuary, Kirkland; SHF – Sky High Sod Farms, T Sullivan; SPd – Sandy Pond; SSSP – Selkirk Shores SP; Syr – Syracuse; UM – Utica Marsh.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Mute Swan: max 7 Deerfield 10 Jun.
Gadwall: HIWMA 31 Aug.
Mallard: 2 f with week-old y OnonL 30 Aug, probably related to wet May.
Blue-winged Teal: nesting GSC; max 18 OnonL 30 Aug.
N. Shoveler: 2 DL 30 Aug.
Green-winged Teal: UM 25 Jul; max 11 DL 30 Aug
Ring-necked Duck: Cranberry Pd HERK 15 Jul.
Greater Scaup: Oswego Jun-Jul.
Com. Loon: reported Skaneateles L where bred in 2002; few yg noted Adks before 3rd week Jul; adults with small yg Stillwater Res 20-22 Aug, late (TS); ad flew to meet and crash into an adult Bald Eagle that was bearing down on its yg on Stillwater Res 22 Aug (John Harris, fide TS).
Am. Bittern: 4 FL Parish 10 Jul; 2 Sangerfield 7 Jun.
Least Bittern: UM & Palermo 1 Jun; SPd 7 Jun; Sage Creek Marsh 1 Jul.
Great Egret: OnonL 4 Jul; max 3 UM 25 Jul; 2 OnonL after 15 Aug.
Green Heron: max 12 OnonL 30 Aug.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: 1-2 OnonL after 1 Aug.
BLACK VULTURE: Marcellus 1 Jun (DavidMuir, fide BP).

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: several reports of unfledged yg on nests late Jul may indicate late nesting; 2 Liverpool 16 Jun, possible nesting OnonL?
Bald Eagle: imm OnonL 4 Jul; 2 ad with 1 yg Stillwater Res 15 Jul.
N. Harrier: f with 3 FL Cross L 9 Aug; m passing food to f at 4 other sites.
Northern Goshawk: reported from 9 sites with 4 CO.
GOLDEN EAGLE: ad Brookfield 10 Jul (JB, DC), first Reg summer record.
Merlin: breeding 2 blocks at Stillwater Res; OnonL 11 Jul; imm Syr after 17 Aug; SHF 31 Aug.
Peregrine Falcon: Syr 1st wk of Jun, not reported (or looked for?) later; GAFB 8 Jul.
Black-bellied Plover: arr SPd 12 Aug; max 1-2 per day.
Am. Golden-Plover: SHF 31 Aug.
Semipalmated Plover: max 12 OnonL 31 Aug.
Killdeer: max 92 SHF 31 Aug.
Greater Yellowlegs: last 10 Jun Kayuta L, record late; arr Weedsport 16 Jul; max 15 OnonL 26 Aug.
Lesser Yellowlegs: arr 3 Schroeppe 1 Jul; 25 OnonL 12 Jul; max 40 OnonL 31 Aug.

Solitary Sandpiper: last W. Winfield 7 Jun; arr 3 OnonL 4 Jul; max 11 OnonL 11 Jul.

Spotted Sandpiper: max 35 OnonL 12 Jul, many yg.

Upland Sandpiper: reports from Boonville, Deerfield, Durhamville, Fulton, GAFB, Russia.

Ruddy Turnstone: SPd 3 Aug; max 3 SPd 4 Aug.

Sanderling: max 10 SPd 3 Aug.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 25 SPd 13 Jul; max 110 OnonL 30 Aug.

Least Sandpiper: arr 3 OnonL 4 Jul; max 50 OnonL 26 Aug.

Baird's Sandpiper: arr 2 SVB 24 Aug; 4 SPd 30 Aug; max 6 SHF 31 Aug.

Pectoral Sandpiper: arr 2 SPd 13 Jul; max 9 OnonL 30 Aug.

Dunlin: alt SPd 13 Jul, never went north?

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: SHF 31 Aug (BB, KM).

Short-billed Dowitcher: max 2 SPd 13 Jul, 3 Aug, 12 Aug.

Little Gull: SPd 30 Aug (GP).

Bonaparte's Gull: max 150 SVB 31 Aug.

Caspian Tern: max 102 SPd 12 Aug.

Com. Tern: max 250 SPd 30 Aug.

Forster's Tern: SPd 10 Aug (DW).

Black Tern: max 7 SSSP 25 Jun.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: max 4 CM 25 Jun.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: max 3 Brookfield 10 Jul; 12 reports from lower Tug Hill OSWE & ONEI where uncommon.

Long-eared Owl: Hastings 11 Jun; 2 fl Three Rivers WMA 25 Jun (JB).

Com. Nighthawk: max 13 Syr 20, 31 Aug; 105 Syr for 13-31 Aug, very low.

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW: Pennelville bird last heard 2 Jun.

Whip-poor-will: reports from Constantia and T Russia.

Chimney Swift: nesting in chimney of only building in Block 4985B in HERK.

Red-headed Woodpecker: reports from

Cato, CS, Ira, Peterboro Swamp, DH, Lebanon Res.

Black-backed Woodpecker: singles Nobleboro, Forestport, Big Moose, Woodhull L, all Jul.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Remsen 5 Jun; Boonville 11 Jun, in good habitat but possibly late migrants; Altmar 10 Jul in good habitat, certainly at edge of range; arr SFWS 31 Aug.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Ava 2 Jun; Ohio 11 Jun; Liverpool 17 Jun, late.

Acadian Flycatcher: not reported other than Whiskey Hollow.

Philadelphia Vireo: singles SFWS & HIWMA 30 Aug.

Gray Jay: Woodhull L 3 Jul; Stillwater Res 4 Jul.

Fish Crow: breeding Liverpool and Woodlawn Cemetery Syr.

Horned Lark: max 20 SHF 31 Aug.

Purple Martin: 3 Victory 12 Jul, now rare away from large lakes.

Tree Swallow: cold, wet May delayed nesting with mixed results, especially at higher elevations.

Cliff Swallow: still found in same areas as in early 1980s, north of Oneida L and lower Tug Hill; possibly declining elsewhere.

Boreal Chickadee: Woodhull L 3 Jul; Stillwater Res 4 Aug; Big Moose 13 Aug.

Carolina Wren: well reported from usual areas, apparently survived harsh winter.

Sedge Wren: se HERK 21 Jun; Cato 23-28 Jun.

Swainson's Thrush: last Syr 5 Jun.

Cedar Waxwing: max 500+ past DH 8 Jun.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: Russia 3 Jun, edge of known range; 5 HIWMA 30 Aug.

"Brewster's" Warbler: ad with yg Rome 5 Jul.

Tennessee Warbler: f feeding yg

Stillwater Res 22 Aug. **N. Parula**: CM 19 Jun, out of range.

Magnolia Warbler: pair feeding yg Mexico 2 Jul, low elevation.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: CS 19 Jun, out of range

Black-throated Green Warbler: feeding yg SSSP 3 Jul; unusual along L Ontario.

Prairie Warbler: on territory Ram's Gulch Dewitt Jun-Jul and Russia 3 Jun.

Blackpoll Warbler: 3 DH 8 Jun; last Gravesville 10 Jun.

Cerulean Warbler: Florence 4 Jun, high elevation.

Prothonotary Warbler: 2 pair with yg Big Bay Swamp W Monroe.

Wilson's Warbler: last DH 8 Jun; arr SVB 24 Aug.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Clay-colored Sparrow: feeding yg GAFB 19 Jun, Reg first confirmed breeding (DL).

Vesper Sparrow: T Marshall 14 Jun; 4 Boonville 15 Jun.

Grasshopper Sparrow: feeding yg GAFB 8 Jul; Green Lakes SP thru Jul; 2 Boonville 29 Jun; Gravesville 2 Jul.

Lincoln's Sparrow: UM 25 Jul (MP), very early or very late?; 3 singing Forestport 13 Jul, in shrubby, cut-over areas.

Bobolink: max 20 SHF 31 Aug.

Rusty Blackbird: in breeding habitat Stillwater Res 4 Jul and Big Moose 13 Jul.

Orchard Oriole: reports from GSC, Green Lakes SP, Clay.

REGION 6 – ST. LAWRENCE

No Report

REGION 7 – ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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This summer was a season of seeming extremes. Complaints alternated from too much heat and humidity to too much rain, and back again. But, as we'll see, Regional weather may not have been all that bad or unusual. The first of June was rainy and cool, with a high of only 57F and a low of 48 at Plattsburgh. A warming trend began 21 June and it became genuinely hot between 23 and 26 June, reaching a high of 94 on the 26th, with several days of unusual smog. Another hot spell began 13 July, reaching 87 by the 15th. There was a lengthy stretch of hot, muggy weather between 30 June and 11 August, then it became clear and hot. Overnight between 3 and 4 August there was up to 3" of rain in parts of the Region, yet it remained dry in other areas, like Elizabethtown, in the shadow of the High Peaks. That was followed by heavy rains everywhere on 5 August, with up to 4" in places and flood warnings issued in Clinton and Essex counties. After an afternoon shower the next

day, storm drains were overflowing and three feet of sand at the Port Douglass beach eroded into Lake Champlain due to a faulty storm drain. There was more rain 10-11 August. As a result of all of the high water rushing down the Boquet River, four young men drowned at Split Rock Falls swimming hole on 12 August. By then the weather had become clear and hot once again. Despite more showers 29 August, Champlain stood at a relatively normal 96.04' at season's end, which typically ended with sun on the 30th, clouds on the 31st. Although the weather seemed extreme for much of the summer, precipitation averages for the Boquet River watershed in 2003 were close to 1971-2000 NOAA averages at Elizabethtown, and even with the 2-2.5" of local rainfall between 5 and 11 August, the Boquet stayed within its banks. Apparently, the summer wasn't all that wet. For August, the monthly total was 3.37", with 3.13" in the Boquet watershed and compared with a 1971-2000 average at Elizabethtown of 3.88".

Observers again moved out across the four northeastern counties and into more of the 698 Atlas 2000 blocks in Region 7 during this penultimate summer of the project. As expected, more volunteers are becoming familiar with a wider range of breeding species and are finally beginning to challenge the 1980-85 team. The records of a few species – obviously Canada Goose, Bald Eagle, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Wild Turkey, Palm Warbler and perhaps even Evening Grosbeak – are a quantum leap ahead of the first Atlas. But it's also encouraging to see more reports of Least Bittern, Willow and Yellow-bellied flycatchers, Philadelphia Vireo, Carolina Wren and Bicknell's Thrush. And not only the boreal warblers, (Tennessee, Cape May and even Wilson's) are turning up, but Pine and Mourning warbler records are improving, as well.

Part of this can be explained by the passage of time and the learning curve, but much is due to now-experienced observers moving out of their original squares, often in more populous and open parts of the Region near their homes, to explore wilder habitats with fresh avian variety. Their original blocks along Champlain at an "adequate" 76+ species (and several at 100+), Bill Krueger and Charlie Mitchell were among those who set out to explore. In a new square in southwestern Clinton County they confirmed Merlins with fledged young at High Bank: "One in particular seemed to have to struggle for balance with fluttering wings." They also found Black-backed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Philadelphia Vireo, Tennessee and Palm warblers and Lincoln's Sparrow. Such are the rewards of finishing your original assignment early.

Two other areas are worthy of special mention, not only for their breeding birds, but also for concentrations of waterbirds, shorebirds, gulls and terns. The first is the oft-mentioned Chazy River Lands, between the Great Chazy and Little Chazy rivers. This summer the peripatetic Krueger and Mitchell, along with Suzy Johnson, managed to locate juvenile Black-crowned Night Heron, three summering Snow Geese, five shorebird species (including 21 Lesser Yellowlegs), up to four Caspian Terns (one with food), some 40 Common Terns (one also carrying food) and Black Tern both there and at nearby Point au Fer. Of notable interest was a **Savannah**

Sparrow singing a hybrid song from 6-17 July at the site where the Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow was found last summer. As Krueger described, "Seen through a scope while singing from a fence post and later on an electrical wire, this bird threw its head back and sang a song that spliced the first half of the Savannah's to the second half of the Nelson's. Both halves, especially the Nelson's *tshhhhhhhhsuh*, were perfect. Only the song, not the bird, appeared to be a hybrid."

In the Fall 1999 report we suggested, "The Town of Willsboro has provided public access to an outstanding birding area with the opening of Noblewood Park on the south bank of the Boquet River delta. We invite observers to visit the black sand beaches, sandbars and neighboring mixed forest..." Since then, a few birders have begun to visit, and subsequent reports suggest that all managed to find interesting birds, regardless of season. This summer, however, Matt Medlar finally did real justice to Noblewood and proved what a gem it is. Although his first visit was on 19 June, when he had the first of three Great Egret sightings, it was not until July and August that he began to make almost daily trips to the mouth of the river, with perhaps five other birders also making visits. See the species accounts for details, but highlights included 15 shorebirds, including White-rumped and Baird's sandpipers; six species of gulls, including Little Gull and **Black-headed Gull**; and three terns, including Caspian Tern. The last, Caspian Tern, is of special interest since seven of the nine species of colonial waterbirds known to nest on Four Brothers – all but Cattle Egret and Glossy Ibis, which normally feed inland – frequented Noblewood Park this summer. The park is just five miles SSW of the islands, which are clearly visible on the lake. This summer, Caspian Terns were found at Noblewood on six different days between 26 July and 16 August, when three were reported, with birds in both basic and alternate plumage. Whether they constituted a tenth colonial-nesting species at Four Brothers cannot be known. The Nature Conservancy being unable to provide for new management of the colonies and the 20-year census no longer done by High Peaks Audubon Society, Inc.

A total of just 172 species was reported, the lowest of the four summers of Atlas 2000, although a few more may show up on tardy Atlas forms. Other rarities included a **Sandhill Crane** flying over Paul Smiths on 19 July, calling high overhead, and an adult male **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** on Limekiln Road, Keene, on 5 July after the passage of Tropical Storm Bill.

CONTRIBUTORS

Bernard Carr, Charlcie Delehanty, Mike Devlin, Brian Drumm, Brett Ewald, Elizabeth & Holland Fitts, Evelyn Greene, Judy & Roger Heintz, Mary Humiston, Suzy Johnson, Cindy Kindle, Bill Krueger, Linda LaPan, Brian McAllister, Matthew Medler, Charles Mitchell, Daniel Nickerson, Nancy Olsen, John Peterson, Emily & James Pugsley, Dana Rohleder, Christina Seguin, Marilyn Smith, John & Patricia Thaxton, Al & Susan Turner, Eileen Van Duyne, Robert Yunick.

ABBREVIATIONS

Adks – Adirondacks; AP – Ausable Pt WMA; CR – Chazy Ri; FB – Ferd's Bog; NP – Noblewood P; PtF – Point au Fer; TL – Tupper L.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: 3 CR 17-28 Jul (BK), present all summer.

Lesser Scaup: TL 30 Aug (CD), near shore of Raquette Pd.

Com. Goldeneye: AP 7 Jul (DR); 2 hens + hen & 3 yg Willsboro Bay 7 Jul (MM); 8 AP 31 Jul (EV); 3 NP 30 Aug (LL, BM, MM), good Champlain finds; none from Adks.

Com. Loon: several basic & alt NP, Port Kent, Willsboro Bay 4 Jul-29 Aug, presumed Champlain nonbreeders.

Double-crested Cormorant: max 600 Willsboro Bay 20 Jun (MM); hundreds dead Four Brothers & S. Sister, VT, late Jul-Aug, VT researchers testing a sample of 130 dead birds (WCAX News 21-22 Sep, North Country Public Radio 22 Sep).

Am. Bittern: AP 7 Jul (DR), chased by Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

Least Bittern: Scotion Cr 4 Jun (NO), close approach by canoe.

Great Egret: NP 19 Jun, 26 Jul, 8 Aug (MM), presumed from Four Bros; TL 24 Jul (CD).

Black-crowned Night-Heron: Willsboro 16 Jun (MM); juv CR 28 Jul (SJ, BK); 2 NP 16 Aug (DR).

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: Bradley Pd, Deer R Flow, L Alice, Little Tupper L, Peru, TL, West River Marsh - only suggestive of distribution.

Golden Eagle: near Chazy L 20 Jun (J&RH); ad Wickham Marsh 13 Jul (DR), chased by Com. Grackle.

Merlin: yg High Bank CLIN 27 Jun-1 Aug (BK); Plattsburgh 7 Jul (J&RH); yg Piseco L 18 Jul-5 Aug (BD, CK); found dead Plattsburgh, tested positive for WNV

12 Aug (*Press-Republican*); also Floodwood, Keene, NP - only suggestive of distribution.

Com. Moorhen: Scotion Cr 4 Jun (NO), only report, surprising.

SANDHILL CRANE: Paul Smiths 19 Jul (BM), flying s, calling high overhead, 1st FRAN record.

Black-bellied Plover: arr NP 13 Aug (MM), flying s, early ESSE.

Semipalmated Plover: last CR 6 Jun (SJ, BK); arr NP 22 Jul (MM) thru; max 5 NP 5 Aug (MM), record high ESSE.

Greater Yellowlegs: arr 3 CR 17 Jul (BK, CM); NP 22 Jul-17 Aug; max 7 NP 23 Jul, record high ESSE.

Lesser Yellowlegs: arr NP 10 Jul-15 Aug; max 21 CR 21 Jul (BK, CM); 6 NP 11 Aug (MM), record high ESSE.

Solitary Sandpiper: arr 2 NP 16 Aug (DR).

Sanderling: arr 3 alt ads NP 24 Jul, early ESSE; max 21 NP 27 Jul, record high ESSE; thru (MM).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: last CR 6 Jun (SJ, BK); arr 2 ad NP 11 Jul (MM) thru; max 12 CR 17 Jul (BK, CM).

Western Sandpiper: arr NP 17 Aug (J&PT).

Least Sandpiper: last 4 CR 6 Jun (SJ, BK); arr 10 ad NP 11 Jul (MM) thru.

White-rumped Sandpiper: arr ad NP 17 Aug (LL, BM, MM), early ESSE.

Baird's Sandpiper: arr 4 juv NP 28 Aug (MM) thru, record high ESSE.

Pectoral Sandpiper: arr NP 5-6 Aug (MM).

Short-billed Dowitcher: arr alt ad *L.g. hendersoni* NP 27 Jul (MM), early ESSE.

Little Gull: arr 2 Port Kent 7 Aug (DR), early ESSE; 2nd winter NP 14-16 Aug (MM, DR); ad NP 16 Aug (DR); 2 AP 18 Aug (J&RH); outstanding.

BLACK-HEADED GULL: alt ad NP 6, 9, 11-12 Aug (J&RH, MM), 1st ESSE & 2nd Reg record and an outstanding find. (N.B. the record in Carleton 1999 should be deleted; not observed in NYS waters, cf. *The Kingbird* 40:49, Winter 1990).

Bonaparte's Gull: NP 10 Jul thru, with numbers growing to 1000 by 11 Aug, max 1000+ 14 Aug, ESSE record high, declining to 250+ by 30 Aug (MM).

Caspian Tern: arr 4 CR 6-7, 28 Jul; 1 carrying food 17 Jul (BK); 1-3 basic & alt NP 26 Jul-16 Aug (MM, DR, EV), origin?; suspected nesting on Popasquash I and/or Young I, VT, in 2000.

Com. Tern: Upper Chateaugay L 6 Jul (MH); 12 CR 17 Jul (BK, CM); CR 26 Jul, carrying food; max 40+ CR 28 Jul (SJ, BK); 2 alt ad & begging juv NP 8 Aug; 2 ad 14 Aug; ad 15 Aug (MM); 6 AP 18 Aug; "large #" 28 Aug (J&RH); 2 basic, 1 alt NP 30 Aug (LL, BM, MM). Can all be nesting on Popasquash I, VT, or is there a closer alternative, especially for NP birds?

Black Tern: 5 CR 26 Jun (BK, CM), 2 at Gravelle's, 3 at PtF; 1-2 NP 30 Aug (LL, BM, MM), encouraging due to loss of historic colonies at Ticonderoga Marsh & TL Marsh.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Port Kent 1-7 Jul (DR); Olmstedville early Jul (EG); the tough one.

E. Screech-Owl: Keene 21 Aug (J&PT), 1500' elevation, but where previously found.

Com. Nighthawk: 3 Miner 3 Jun (NO, MS); 3 Ausable Chasm 6 Jul; max 8 Ausable R 14 Jul (DR); several Peru 9 Aug (E&HF), giving booming display.

Whip-poor-will: 7 Walker Rd Whallonsburg 10 Jul (MM), noteworthy number.

Chimney Swift: max 40-50 Willsboro 6:30 p.m. 11 Aug (MM), record high ESSE.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Murtaugh Hill

feeder, Altona 11 Jun (CS), only report.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: Monty Bay 26 Aug (BK), only report.

Black-backed Woodpecker: Paul Smiths 7 Jun (J&PT), on nest; Standish Rd CLIN 27 Jun (BK, CM); Rollins Pd 12 Aug (BE); seems low.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: 6 locations sw CLIN (BK, CM), good Atlas finds.

Willow Flycatcher: m Upper Works 10 Jul (J&PT), unexpected in High Peaks.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER: ad m Limekiln Rd Keene 5 Jul (E&JP, J&PT, A&ST) following Tropical Storm Bill; 1st ESSE & Reg record.

Philadelphia Vireo: Avalanche Camp 15 Jun (J&PT); RR bed Block 5894B 16 Jun (BK) responded to tape; True Brook Rd CLIN 17 Jun (BK, CM); Upper Works 10 Jul (J&PT); all welcome Atlas finds.

Com. Raven: NP 27 Jul (MM) chased by E. Kingbird; 2 CR 12 Aug (BK, MM, CM), both suggestive of increases right along L Champlain.

Purple Martin: Miner 3 Jul (NO, MS); NP 27 Jul (J&PT); only reports.

swallow sp.: 200+ of the 4 species NP 27 Jul (J&PT) feeding & resting on sandbar.

Cliff Swallow: 4 yg fledged Peru 21 Aug (EF), late.

Boreal Chickadee: Couchsachrage, Elk L, Yard Mt; all expected locales.

Carolina Wren: pr CH 19 Aug thru (NO), only summer report.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: NP 19 Jun (MM), ideal habitat.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: ad m with fledglings Willsboro 19 Jun (MM), only report.

Tennessee Warbler: singing m Ausable Lks 12 Jul (J&PT); pr True Brook Rd CLIN 18 Jul (BK); both welcome finds.

Cape May Warbler: singing m Keene 6 Jun (J&PT), only report.

Palm Warbler: Standish Rd CLIN 17 & 24 Jun (BK, CM); singing m FB 23 Jun (BC); singing m Sanford L bog 10 Jul (J&PT); pr Churubusco (J&RH); all good Atlas finds.

Wilson's Warbler: sw CLIN Jun (BK) in suitable habitat.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Savannah Sparrow: singing m CR 6-17 Jul (BK, CM), giving hybrid song, *intro*.

Lincoln's Sparrow: The Gulf CLIN 18 Jun (J&RH), bordering Québec.

Red Crossbill: Miner Dam 8 Jul (NO,

MS), pr & juv feeding on [green] White Spruce cones.

Evening Grosbeak: Akey Rd, Cheney Hill, Duane Ctr, L Titus, Port Kent, feeding yg Peru feeder 19 Jul (EF); banded Elizabethtown 23 Oct 1997 (JP), retrapped Jenny L SARA 28 Jul 2003 (RY).

ADDENDA

Brant: 50 Westport 30 May 2003 (MM), flying n.

WILLET: CR 31 May 2003 (BK, CM), heard only.

REGION 8 – HUDSON-MOHAWK

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As reported from Albany International Airport, temperatures and precipitation in June were consistent with historical averages. July and August were both warm and wet. Precipitation totaled 4.52" in July, 1.02" above normal, with an average temperature of 72.2F, 1.1 above normal. In August, the average temperature was 72.7, 3.7 above normal. August's average rainfall was only 0.74" above normal, but this obscures the fact that portions of the Mohawk and Hudson river valleys received downpours of more than 2" on multiple dates. With humid weather and daily cloudbursts in mid August, some migratory songbirds might have thought they had never left the tropics.

The rain had no immediate effects on either berry or mast crops. Flying insects and mosquitoes increased due to standing breeding pools, but it's hard to determine if songbirds benefited from additional prey, especially when other factors, such as suitable nesting habitat, remained unchanged. Rivers, lakes and ponds were at historically high levels this summer, following a wet spring and a snow-packed winter. This might affect the fall diet of some duck species, as persistent high water hampers the reproduction of many water plants.

Despite flooded shorelines, the Region catalogued a respectable list of shorebirds this summer, a heartening fact after last spring's dismal showing. In mid July, New Street in Cohoes, Albany County, hosted what one enthusiastic birder termed "a shorebird extravaganza." Observers recorded over 200 Greater Yellowlegs, hundreds of Least Sandpipers, good numbers of Black-bellied and Semipalmated plovers, Ruddy Turnstones, Pectoral and Stilt sandpipers and a

Sanderling. Such concentrations of migrant shorebirds, while frequently observed in other parts of the state, remain uncommon events in eastern upstate New York.

Another summer of atlasng added much needed data on a variety of poorly documented species, establishing confirmed breeding evidence for Common Merganser, Peregrine Falcon, Common Moorhen, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Alder Flycatcher, Fish Crow, Swainson's Thrush, Golden-winged Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler and Grasshopper Sparrow. Our Region's declining grassland species echo a statewide trend. However Savannah Sparrow, Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark all had remarkable breeding successes this summer. Atlasers recorded six different mid-summer sightings of Northern Harrier, but sadly did not observe any probable breeding behavior for this vanishing species.

Osprey is another raptor that is frequently observed here in summer without evidence of breeding. The dozen nesting platforms erected along the Hudson River in cooperation with Columbia-Greene Community College have yet to host a single nesting pair. Except for isolated nests in Warren County on the fringe of the Adirondacks, there are no records of breeding Osprey in the Region, a fact that is likely to change since this species has been observed building (but not using) stick nests at Stockport Flats, Columbia County, and defending modest territories against Bald Eagles and other raptors in June and July. Ospreys, unlike Bald Eagles, have a high tolerance for human interference, a quality that will be requisite should the species endure the Hudson's increasing marina traffic and construction. The fact that Osprey commonly nest in southern New York and in the Adirondacks suggests that the gap between the two breeding ranges may someday be bridged in our Region.

Finally, another sighting of **Prothonotary Warbler** has been added to the state's records. The discovery was made by the Specht family in southern Columbia County. The slow northward expansion of this species continues on the heels of other well-documented southern species, such as Black Vulture and Red-bellied Woodpecker. There are fewer than 20 reliable sightings of Prothonotary Warbler in the Region, nearly half documented after 1980. This latest adult, however, heard singing for several days in late July, did not occupy its territory as long as another locally uncommon warbler, a Hooded Warbler spotted on the same trail for the third year in a row at Alandar Mountain in Copake, also in Columbia County.

Observers recorded a total of 174 species this season.

CONTRIBUTORS

Larry Alden, Alan Devoe Bird Club monthly sighting reports, Bill Cook, Larry Federman, Jane Graves, Rich Guthrie, Hudson Mohawk Bird Club's Birdline of Eastern New York, Catherine Klatt, Al & Margaret Koechlein, William Lee, Andrew Mason, Gail & Rich Nord, Tom Palmer, Tim Post, Barb Putman, Carl, Helen & Stephanie Specht, Alison Van Keuren, Carol & Owen Whitby, Will Yandik, Robert Yunick.

ABBREVIATIONS

AUS – T Austerlitz COLU; BCM – Black Creek Marsh WMA ALBA; BMT – Bog Meadow Trail T Saratoga SARA; CAI – T Cairo GREE; COH – New St Flats T Cohoes ALBA; DUR – T Durham GREE; GAN – T Gansevoort SARA; HAL – T Halcott GREE; HR – Hudson Ri; JL – Jenny L SARA; LIV – T Livingston COLU; MR – Mohawk Ri; NB – T New Baltimore GREE

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Blue-winged Teal: 5 COH 24 Aug, only report.
Green-winged Teal: 2 COH 24 Aug, only report.
Com. Merganser: fl DUR 24 Jun; fl CAI 25 Jun.
Ring-necked Pheasant: displaying W. Ashland GREE 1 Jun, possibly part of a locally established population.
Com. Loon: Block 5278A FULT 14 Jun; ne Caroga L FULT 28 Jun; ad JL 28-30 Aug.
Am. Bittern: Ft Edward WASH 7 Jun & 18 Jun; LIV 23 Jun.
Least Bittern: Vischer Ferry SARA 4 Jun; 2 BCM 5 Jul.
Great Egret: 2 COH 24 Jul; MR 26 Aug.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: Hillsdale COLU 24 Aug, far from known breeding sites, probably post-breeding dispersal.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: nest with yg Glen L WARR thru Jun; Claverack COLU 8 Jun; COH chasing Bald Eagle 12 Jul; AUS 5 Aug.
N. Harrier: Hillsville MONT 14 Jun; Kingsbury WASH 15 Jun; Block 5274B 16 Jun; Stone Arabia MONT 23 Jun; Davis Corners MONT 25 Jul; Block 6375A 31 Jul.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: no confirmed breeding reports.
Cooper's Hawk: no confirmed breeding reports.
N. Goshawk: Ashland GREE 3 Jun, only report.
Red-shouldered Hawk: CAI 25 Jun; Mohawk MONT 1 Jul; AUS 31 Aug.

Broad-winged Hawk: GAN 9 Jun; 3 NB 19 Jul.

Peregrine Falcon: 4 fledged successfully Dunn Memorial Bridge ALBA 9 Jul; RENS 24 Aug.

Com. Moorhen: fl Block 5373B 29 Jul.
Virginia Rail: Ft Edward WASH 7 Jun, only report.

Sora: Block 5274B 16 Jun, only report.

Black-bellied Plover: max 8 COH 1 Aug.

Semipalmated Plover: max 6 COH 16 Jul.

Killdeer: 30 NB 20 Jul; max 40 Bemis Heights SARA 27 Jul.

Greater Yellowlegs: 3 COH 27 Jul; max 200+ COH 1 Aug.

Lesser Yellowlegs: max 16 COH 16 Jul; 8 COH 27 Jul; 4 COH 2 Aug.

Solitary Sandpiper: arr Caroga L FULT 29 Jun.

Spotted Sandpiper: 3 Peebles I SARA 26 Jul; max 10 SARA 27 Jul.

Upland Sandpiper: max 5 Canajoharie MONT 28 Jun; 4 Palatine MONT 3 Jul.

Ruddy Turnstone: 9 COH 1 Aug.

Sanderling: COH 27 Jul-1 Aug.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: COH 27 Jul.

Least Sandpiper: 7 Peebles I SARA 12 Jul; 20 SARA 27 Jul; max 200+ COH 28 Jul.

Pectoral Sandpiper: SARA 27 Jul; max 20+ COH 1 Aug; 3 Lock 7 SCHE 26 Aug.

Stilt Sandpiper: 2 SARA 27-28 Jul; max 12 COH 1 Aug.

Short-billed Dowitcher: 2 COH 16 Jul.

Ring-billed Gull: NB 20 Jul; max 600 COH 2 Aug.

Caspian Tern: COH 12 Jul.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: feeding yg Blocks 6377C & 6382A 16 Jun.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 15 reports of singles, more numerous than previous summers.

E. Screech-Owl: only 4 reports of singles, probably overlooked.

Great Horned Owl: 4 juv Schneider Rd LIV 4 Jul; 5 reports of singles.

Barred Owl: 2 Block 5278C FULT 28 Jun; Chatham COLU 17 Aug; max 3 JL 29 Aug; 7 other reports.

N. Saw-whet Owl: fl Quay Rd Knox ALBA 17 Jun (CK).

Com. Nighthawk: LIV 2 Jun; 10 SUNY campus ALBA 18 Aug; 8 Doane Stuart School ALBA 25 Aug; max 27 Slingerlands SARA 25 Aug; 7 Erie Blvd SCHE 29 Aug.

Whip-poor-will: arr Cairo Round Top GREE 3 Jun, active nesting site; Kayaderoseras Creek SARA 16-25 Aug; singing Hillsdale COLU thru.

Chimney Swift: max 150 COH 27 Jul.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: trapped (unharmd) in spider web Altamont ALBA 7 Jul; 127 banded JL 1 Jun-31 Aug (RY).

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: BMT 6 Jun, only report.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: ALBA 25 Aug, only report.

Alder Flycatcher: confirmed breeding in 9 blocks in GREE.

Blue-headed Vireo: Copake COLU 14 Jun; confirmed breeding in 15 blocks N Catskills GREE; 4 other reports.

Blue Jay: somewhat scarce, banders report fewer caught in mist nets.

Fish Crow: feeding yg Block 5773B 21 Jun; 3 Saratoga Springs SARA 20 Jul; 3 NB 31 Jul.

Cliff Swallow: confirmed breeding in 9 blocks in GREE, 3 large colonies of 30+ pairs, others colonized in smaller number

with Barn Swallows; 6 nests with yg GAN 30 Jun.

Veery: max 5 BMT 24 Jun.

Bicknell's Thrush: none reported outside known breeding areas.

Swainson's Thrush: 2 Block 5278A FULT 14 Jun; Caroga L FULT 16 Jun; HAL 17 Jun; fl Black Dome Mt GREE 28 Jun; 2 Block 5278C FULT 28 Jun.

Hermit Thrush: confirmed breeding GREE, FULT, RENS, WARR, WASH.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: increasing and likely displacing Golden-winged in ALBA, COLU, GREE.

Golden-winged Warbler: 4 singing Amsterdam MONT 7 Jun; feeding yg E. Durham GREE 27 Jun; DUR 20 Jul.

"Brewster's" Warbler: Block 5774A 15 Jun; m paired with f Blue-winged feeding yg Hebron WASH 19 Jun.; DUR 24 Jun.

"Lawrence's" Warbler: Livingston-Ramshorn Sanctuary GREE 6 Jun (LF).

Nashville Warbler: 2 BMT thru; HAL 25 Jun; feeding yg E. Durham GREE 27 Jun; feeding yg Block 5278B FULT 28 Jun; Heldebergs ALBA 13 Aug.

N. Parula: singing S Prattsville GREE 1 Jun; S RENS 16-30 Jun.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: 30+ breeding pairs GREE.

Blackpoll Warbler: breeding Thomas Cole Mt Catskills GREE 28 Jun; arr Scotia SCHE 18 Aug.

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER: singing E. Taghkanic COLU 23-25 Jul (C,S&HS).

Worm-eating Warbler: Alandar Mt Copake COLU 14 Jun, possible breeding site.

N. Waterthrush: nested Block 5674B 1 Jun; 2 ALBA 8 Jun; feeding yg CAI 25 Jun; GAN 24 Jul.

Mourning Warbler: 2 singing Phillip Rd MONT 14-15 Jun; Block 5775D 23 Jun; HAL 25 Jun; singing Hebron WASH 26 Jun.

Hooded Warbler: Alandar Mt Copake COLU thru, same location third year in a row.

Canada Warbler: HAL 15 Jun; Caroga L FULT 16 Jun; BMT 26 Jun; 3 Block 5278A FULT 29 Jun; AUS 8 Aug.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Vesper Sparrow: Stone Arabia MONT 23 Jun; Block 5274B 29 Jun.

Grasshopper Sparrow: 5775D 15 Jun; 3 breeding pairs S Prattsville GREE 2 Jul; breeding pair N Prattsville GREE 3 Jul.

Lincoln's Sparrow: N Cairo GREE 26 Jun, rare outside Adirondacks in summer; 2 Block 5278B FULT 28 Jun.

Bobolink: max 50 Coxsackie Flats

GREE; successful breeding year throughout Reg.

E. Meadowlark: 3 NB 20 Jul; widespread breeding COLU, GREE, RENS, WASH due to abundant grasses this summer.

Orchard Oriole: 2 Block 6279D WASH 1 Jul; Block 6179B WASH 2 Jul.

Purple Finch: numbers locally increasing; 203 banded JL Mar-Aug, highest number in 11 yrs (RY); fairly common breeder GREE.

Pine Siskin: displaying Ashland GREE 3 Jun, none reported thereafter.

Evening Grosbeak: breeding pr banded JL 6 Jun; max 8 JL 22 Jul.

REGION 9 – HUDSON-DELAWARE

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The season started with the wettest June on record, at least for Westchester County. White Plains had just over 8" of rain. Normal rainfall is just 3.4" for the month. The northern part of the Region fared much better, with Poughkeepsie coming in at 4.6" of rain, 0.8" above normal. All the rain dropped the average temperatures for the first three weeks to 3-6°F below normal. A heat wave from 24 to 27 June helped moderate the average temperatures for the month. July was on the dry side. White Plains dried out from the month before with only 2.0" of rain, 2.2" below normal. Rock Hill in Sullivan County and Poughkeepsie were 1.0" and 1.3" below normal, respectively. Temperatures did not break 90 either in White Plains or Rock Hill in the month. White Plains was 1.8 cooler than average. August started with a week of very humid tropical air, sprouting numerous powerful thunderstorms day after day. Poughkeepsie was hit the hardest and ended up with 6.45" for the month, 2.6" more than normal. The rest of August was dry and warm. This led to White Plains averaging out to a little below normal rainfall for the month. Temperatures were generally around 2°F above normal.

A great find was an adult male **Rufous Hummingbird**, frequenting Rick Horn's feeder near Washingtonville, Orange County, on 1 August. It was only seen again the next day.

The biggest find of the season was an immature **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** found late in the afternoon at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation in northern Westchester County on 5 July by Gail Benson and Tom Burke. The bird was flycatching from phone wires just inside the park entrance near the Michigan Road intersection. Thanks to numerous phone calls, about a dozen lucky birders were able to see it. Unfortunately, despite intensive searching, the bird could not be relocated the following day. The bird was photographed and a NYSARC report was submitted. This was Westchester's second record. The first was found by Helen Cruickshank in Rye on 7 May 1945.

Prothonotary Warbler may be the next southern breeder to move into the neighborhood. A singing Prothonotary Warbler was found in Mianus River Gorge on 15 June. Then, on 23 July, Diane Sheridan found one feeding two fledglings in Atlas Block 5459B near the intersection of King and Scotchtown-Collabar Roads, Wallkill, Orange County.

An August 24 cold front brought an influx of many migrants into the area.

Other notable species included both "Brewster's" and "Lawrence's" hybrid warblers, Summer Tanager, Clay-colored Sparrow and Blue Grosbeak.

CONTRIBUTORS

Carroll Arkema, John Askildsen, Gail Benson, Arlene Borko, Tom Burke, Steve Chorvas, Mary Collier, Renee Davis, Lin Fagan, Valerie Freer, Amy & Wes Gillingham, Scott Graber, Theresa Griesbeck, John Haas, Dick Hirschman, Rick Horn, John Kenny, Veronika Krause, Pat Lutter, Keith McDermott, Ellen & Joe O'Connell, Pat Pollock, Diane Sheridan, Seldon Spencer, Lloyd & Sandy Spitalnik, John Tirpak, Jane Vecchione, Carol Weiss.

ABBREVIATIONS

CPP – Croton Point P; EGR – Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary; MC – Marshlands Conservancy; RNC – Rye Nature Center.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Brant: 60 MC 6 Jun; 2 EGR 12 Jun.

Ruffed Grouse: 3ad, 2y Harriman SP 23 Jun.

Com. Loon: Callicoon Center 6 Jun.

Pied-billed Grebe: low numbers at Bashakill.

Am. Bittern: 1-3 Bashakill thru.

Snowy Egret: 2 ULST early Aug.

Glossy Ibis: 3 MC 4 Jul.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Merlin: Loch Sheldrake 23-24 Aug, early

(JH, AB).

Com. Moorhen: low numbers at Bashakill.

Semipalmated Plover: 22 MC 24 Jul; Piermont Pier 4, 9 Aug; 3 Loch Sheldrake 18 Aug.

Killdeer: 37 Loch Sheldrake 18 Aug.

Am. Oystercatcher: MC 12 Jun; 5 EGR 20, 24 Jun; many Rye Jul.

Lesser Yellowlegs: 3 Loch Sheldrake 18 Aug.

Solitary Sandpiper: Loch Sheldrake 18 Aug.

Spotted Sandpiper: 2 Loch Sheldrake 18 Aug.

Ruddy Turnstone: 1-2 Piermont Pier 4, 7 Aug.

Sanderling: Piermont Pier 4-5 Aug.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 130 MC 28 Jul; 3 Loch Sheldrake 18 Aug.

Least Sandpiper: 15 Loch Sheldrake 18 Aug.

Pectoral Sandpiper: Piermont Pier 4 Aug; 3 Loch Sheldrake 18 Aug.

Short-billed Dowitcher: 2 MC 24 Jul.

Laughing Gull: 28 EGR 20 EGR.

Bonaparte's Gull: Piermont Pier 1-2 Jun.

Forster's Tern: 2 MC 6 Jun; 2 begging juv with ad MC 29 Jul.

Least Tern: 2 MC 2 Jun; 4 MC 4 Jul.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Com. Nighthawk: 13 Bashakill 19 Aug; 139 Yonkers 21 Aug; 47 Bashakill 29 Aug.

Whip-poor-will: some reports from SULL only; one still singing Bashakill 29 Aug.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: 22-30 at one group of feeders, Claryville 22 Jul (RD, TG).

RUFUS HUMMINGBIRD: Washingtonville 1-2 Aug (RH, L&SS).

Red-headed Woodpecker: Livingston Manor 15 Jun (A&WG).

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: 2 MC 3 Jun; Wurtsboro 23 Jun; Lenoir Preserve 13 Aug; 2 MC 22-31 Aug.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Ellenville 19 Aug.

Acadian Flycatcher: 3 Harriman SP 12 Jun; 2 Mianus River Gorge 15 Jun; 3 Buttermilk Farm area SULL mid Jun; 3 Wurtsboro 19 Jun; Pond Eddy 5 Jul; pair Rio Reservoir 9, 16 Jul.

Alder Flycatcher: MC 3 Jun; Mianus River Gorge 15 Jun; singing Tusten Mt L 2 Jul.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER: Ward Pound Ridge 5 Jul (TB!, GB, ph).

Yellow-throated Vireo: Bashakill 29-30 Aug.

Blue-headed Vireo: Pound Ridge Reservation 14 Jun.

Purple Martin: 5-9 Rye Jun and Jul.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: some migrants reported late Aug.

Marsh Wren: 4 MC 6 Jun; 2 EGR 24 Jun; Piermont Marsh 4 Aug.

Bicknell's Thrush: 2 ad, 1 y Wittenberg Mt 6 Jul (CA, JK, SC).

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: Linear P Summitville 1 Jun; RNC 31 Aug.

"Brewster's" Warbler: Doodletown 8 Jun.

"Lawrence's" Warbler: RNC 31 Aug (TB).

Nashville Warbler: Eldred 26 Jun; Glen Spey 27 Jul.

N. Parula: Wurtsboro 8-9 Jun; Sundown 16 Jun; Eldred 25 Jun; sev Minisink Ford 29 Jun, 4 Jul; 3 Pond Eddy 5 Jul; 2 Narrowsburg 7, 9 Jul; Lumberland 15 Jul.

Blackburnian Warbler: 6 Wurtsboro thru Jun.

Pine Warbler: pr feeding y Blauvelt 28 Jun.

Cerulean Warbler: Bashakill 19 Jun.

Prothonotary Warbler: singing male Mianus River Gorge 15 Jun (TB, GB, JT); ad feeding 2 fl Atlas Block 5459B ORAN 23 Jul (DS).

Mourning Warbler: MC 31 Aug (TB).

Yellow-breasted Chat: RNC 28 Aug (TB).

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Summer Tanager: 1st yr male Katonah 9 Jun (JA).

Clay-colored Sparrow: Spring Farm Mohonk Preserve 1-5 Jun (JV, LF).

Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow: MC 2 Jun (TB).

Lincoln's Sparrow: early migrant Ellenville 19 Aug (VF).

White-throated Sparrow: still singing Fir Brook 26 Jul (VF, MC).

Dark-eyed Junco: feeding y Wurtsboro 1 Jun (JH); 2 ad, 1 juv Beaver L 21 Jun (JH).

Blue Grosbeak: Clarkstown Dump 13 Jul (CW).

Bobolink: 13 CPP 28 Jul.

Orchard Oriole: reported from all counties.

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REGION 10 – MARINE

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Rain fell on half the days during the season, making for a wet summer. June set a new record for precipitation, with 10.27" of rain. July and August received a third more rain than normal. Overall, June was 3.1F below normal, for a very cool, wet month. The rest of the season averaged out, with July slightly cooler and August slightly warmer than normal. It was not a good season for beach goers. Except for Atlas work and a few non-lingering rarities, the summer birding was mostly uneventful.

On 17 August, a pelagic trip to the west wall of the Hudson Canyon visited both NJ and NY waters. In general, bird numbers were low. However, the highlight, in NY waters, was good looks at a **White-faced Storm-Petrel** feeding among the Wilson's Storm-Petrels. Shortly afterward, an **Audubon's Shearwater** was also seen in NY waters. Reports were received from Paul A. Guris, tour operator, Dave Klauber and Phil Jeffrey, who placed pictures on his Web site.

On the morning of 23 June, Ken Allaire saw a White Ibis at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. Although it was rumored to be there for about a week, his was the only report.

On 27 August, Tom Fiore reported a Black Vulture flying over Central Park. After an absence of 50+ years, Cooper's Hawks have returned to some traditional breeding habitats in the Region. Three confirmed nests with fledglings this year were at the New York Botanical Garden, The Bronx; Dix Hills, Town of Huntington; and Maple Swamp, a fresh water wetland in Southampton Town.

New York City introduced four fledged Bald Eagles from Wisconsin to the 196-acre Inwood Hill Park, Manhattan. Although there is no known record that Bald Eagles ever nested in the New York City area, park officials are trying for a second time to introduce this endangered species into the city. Two of last year's fledglings were last seen flying near the George Washington Bridge. Another was hit by an Amtrak train on nearby tracks, later contracted West Nile virus while in rehab, and

died. The fourth was found in the Catskills, where it had been shot and is currently in a rehabilitation hospital.

There were no reports of Common Moorhen this season and only one in the late spring from eastern Long Island (Quogue). This species is quietly disappearing from the Region. On 15 July, Cliff Hagen observed a **Sandhill Crane** flying over New Dorp, Staten Island.

On 7 June, Shai Mitra and Pat Lindsay discovered a **Wilson's Plover** at Mecox Bay. It was gone the next day. Also present were a Red-necked Phalarope, a Caspian Tern and an immature Black-headed Gull. On 9 August, an American Avocet was found at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. It remained to 11 August. On 10 June, Eric Salzman found a Ruff at Pike's Beach. It was not relocated.

There are two non-contiguous races of Willet: the nominate, *Captotrophorus semipalmatus semipalmatus*, breeding locally in coastal eastern North America south to northern Mexico, and a western race, *C. s. inornatus*, which breeds on the prairies of southwest Canada and northwest United States. The eastern race migrates southward along the eastern seaboard while the western population migrates mostly to the Pacific Coast and south to northern Peru. However, a portion of the western population apparently flies directly east from the breeding grounds and then moves south along the east coast. Since by late July our local adult breeding population has already departed, those adults recorded after mid to late July are quite likely the western subspecies. This discussion arises because of the spate in recent seasons of "western" Willet reports, including four this season by Dave Klauber at Pike's Beach, Westhampton Dunes on 11 June. This date seems extraordinarily early, but we have much to learn, which will only come from observers carefully noting the subspecies seen.

On 22 June, Seth Ausubel, Isaac Grant and Gene Herskovics had nice looks at a fly-by light-phase adult Pomarine Jaeger at the jetty at Democrat Point, Fire Island. There were also a few Northern Gannets, 10 Wilson's Storm-Petrels and a pod of 10 bottlenose dolphins.

The ongoing summer Piping Plover protective beach watch at Jones Beach West End has had an extremely positive result for other species as well. Least Terns, again nesting on the beach to the east of the West End parking lot, returned in what might be record numbers. There were approximately 450+ pairs of Least Terns, a returning small colony of Common Terns and a possible Black Skimmer nesting there. Meanwhile, early results indicated the plovers themselves were doing well.

Cuckoos are an elusive group whose presence is usually not too evident, nor are they always reported when seen. This season, in contrast, there were numerous reports of both Yellow-billed and Black-billed cuckoos from all parts of the Region.

On two successive days, 23 and 24 July, a photographer and a summer staff worker (both "non birders") briefly saw an unfamiliar looking bird with an extremely long tail at the Marine Nature Study Area, Oceanside. Neither sounded an immediate alert, and by the time they did the bird had departed. Both were questioned by Mike Farina, Staff Biologist, and this editor. They independently

described in some detail an adult **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** and picked the illustration out of Sibley. This bird was found in the same place as one seen there in late June 2000.

The Atlas project found evidence of possible breeding by a "Brewster's" Warbler at William Cullen Bryant Preserve, Roslyn, and of a "Lawrence's" Warbler (singing a Blue-winged Warbler song) at Montauk County Park, East Hampton.

On 6 June, Tom Brown, Jarrod Santora, Tim White and Kristin Ampella, working at a banding station at Fort Tilden, caught a male **Connecticut Warbler** in the nets. The bird was measured and photographed. Descriptions and photographs were distributed for review. This species is extremely rare along the coast in the spring. On that same day, they banded four Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, 2 Willow Flycatchers and an Acadian Flycatcher.

On 14 June, Robert McGrath found an adult Lark Sparrow at Jones Beach West End. The bird was singing along the median just west of the Roosevelt Nature Center. This species is uncommon in fall and quite rare in spring.

Orchard Orioles are exhibiting a substantial range extension to the western part of our Region, with confirmed nests on Staten Island, Central Park and Prospect Park. On 21 August, Mary Laura Lamont reported an adult female **Yellow-headed Blackbird** at a feeder behind the office at Orient Beach State Park.

On 16 June, a male Evening Grosbeak paid a short visit to Joel Horman's feeder in Ridge. The date is highly unusual, but not unprecedented.

Correction: The reference to "intermediate" Brant in the spring 2003 report (Vol. 53 No. 3) refers to "Grey-bellied"/"Lawrence's" Brant. The report should read: two different "Gray-bellied"/"Lawrence's" Brant, at Riis Park on 30 March and another at Captree Island, 29 April.

A note and clarification about recent pelagic bird records: There are ongoing discussions by NYSARC with other state records committees relative to New York's ocean birding boundaries. At present, no standardized agreement exists between us or any of our neighboring states. For some years, New York has been following a definition similar to what has recently been referred to as the "Buckley" rules. These rules, with their accompanying map, plus NYSARC's word definitions, place the entire Hudson Canyon, a prime birding destination, solely in New York waters. In the event that a future line of demarcation alters these boundaries in any way, it will probably become impossible to place many past records as to state of sighting.

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ABBREVIATIONS

APP – Alley Pond P; CP – Central P; DP – Democrat Pt, FI; FI – Fire I; FP – Forest P; FTT – Fort Tilden QUEE; GR – Grumman facility Calverton; HLSP – Hempstead L SP; JBWE – Jones Beach West End; JBWR – Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; MEB – Mecox Bay; MNSA – Marine Nature Study Area Oceanside; MP – Montauk Pt; PB – Pike's Beach Westhampton; PBP – Pelham Bay P; PL – Point Lookout side Jones Inlet; PP – Prospect P; RIV – Riverhead sod fields; RMSP – Robert Moses SP; SG – Sagaponack; SGP – Sagg Pd Bridgehampton; SHIN – Shinnecock Inlet; SI – Staten I; TRM – Theodore Roosevelt County P Montauk; VCP – Van Cortlandt Park BRON

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: CP 6 Jun, late migrant.

King Eider: f JBWR thru.

N. Bobwhite: TRM 3 Jun; Eastport 8 Jun; Calverton 19 Jun; RIV 23 Jun; near Deer Park train station 27 Jun, 16, 18 Jul.

Red-necked Grebe: SG to 4 Jun.

N. Fulmar: s of Montauk 22 Jun.

Cory's Shearwater: 36 seen 32 miles sw of MP 19 Jul; 200 off MP 7 Aug; 30 seen 20 miles se of SHIN 14 Aug; off SGP 18 Aug; others.

Greater Shearwater: 21 miles e of MP Jun 14; 3 off MP 14 Jun; 1000 off MP 21 Jun; 12 seen 32 miles sw of MP 19 Jul; 200 off MP 7 Aug, 2 on 10 Aug; 2 SHIN 28 Aug; others.

Sooty Shearwater: 20 SHIN 1 Jun; 5 off SHIN 8 Jun; off MP 14 Jun; 500 off MP 21 Jun; on trip to Hudson Canyon 23-26

Jun; off MP 7 Jul.

Manx Shearwater: 2 SHIN 1 Jun; DP 7 Jun; off MP 14 Jun, 6-7 Aug.

AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER: Hudson Canyon 17 Aug (PG, DK, PJ).

Wilson's Storm-Petrel: numerous off shore thru; small numbers off DP, SHIN, MP; in NY waters LI Sound from ferries to CT.

WHITE-FACED STORM-PETREL:

Hudson Canyon 17 Aug (PG, DK, PJ).

Brown Pelican: off RMSP 26 Jul; 2 Riis P 3 Aug; few sightings this year.

Least Bittern: JBWR 15 Jul.

Cattle Egret: Southold 10 Jul; 1-2 JBWR thru.

WHITE IBIS: JBWR 23 Jun (KA).

BLACK VULTURE: CP 27 Aug (TF).

Turkey Vulture: 2 TRM 3 Jun; Garvies Pt Preserve 23 Jul; CP 6 Aug; SI 15 Aug;

Bridgehampton 27 Aug.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: scattered reports in each month.

Cooper's Hawk: y fledged NY Botanical Garden BRON & Dix Hills SUFF & Maple Swamp, a fresh water wetlands T Southampton. There were no breeding records in the Reg during the last Atlas.

Broad-winged Hawk: 8 TRM 3 Jun; return migration started PP 25 Aug, CP 27 Aug.

Virginia Rail: regular Wertheim NWR (ERL *fide* HMG).

Sora: JBWR 28 Jul; 27-30 Aug.

Com. Moorhen: no reports; a report before and after the season in Quogue may indicate a possible breeder.

SANDHILL CRANE: flying over New Dorp SI near Miller Field 15 Jul (CH).

Am. Golden-Plover: sod fields Riverhead mid Aug on; others from JBWR to Orient Pt.

WILSON'S PLOVER: MEB 7-8 Jun (SA, PL).

Am. Avocet: JBWR 9-11 Aug.

Willet: 4 "western race" PB 11 Jun (DK), date appears unusual, but details convincing.

Upland Sandpiper: Gabreski Airport 2 Jun; Manorville 29 July; RIV 21 Aug.

Whimbrel: south shore late Jul on.

Hudsonian Godwit: JBWR 26 Jul on; PB mid Aug on; Cupsogue 23, 25 Aug.

Marbled Godwit: 4 JBWR 25 Aug; near Ponquogue Bridge SHIN 27 Aug.

Baird's Sandpiper: SGP 16 Aug; MEB 21, 23, 25, 30 Aug; 1-4 JBWR 23 Aug on.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: JBWR 23-24 Aug; MEB 23 Aug; RIV 23, 28, 30 Aug; Breezy Pt 31 Aug.

Ruff: PB 10 Jun.

Short-billed Dowitcher: 1000 estimated between PB and Cupsogue County P 1 Jul; 2000 on 3 Aug.

Wilson's Phalarope: MEB 19-24 Jul; Westhampton Dunes 3 Aug; 2 JBWR 24

Aug; JBWR 27 Aug.

Red-necked Phalarope: alt f MEB 6-9 Jun; JBWR 23, 31 Aug; RMSP 31 Aug.

SOUTH POLAR SKUA: s of MP 26 Jun (AK).

Pomarine Jaeger: DP 22 Jun (SA, IG, GH).

Parasitic Jaeger: off SHIN 7 Jun; off Ponquogue Beach 8 Jun; 2 imm off SG Main Beach 6 Aug.

Long-tailed Jaeger: imm over SG 9 Aug (AL).

Black-headed Gull: imm MEB 7 Jun.

Bonaparte's Gull: lingering/summering individuals from SI to MEB.

Glaucous Gull: MEB 9 Jul (AB).

Gull-billed Tern: during breeding season JBWR, MNSA, JBWE; later Dune Rd & Cupsogue.

Caspian Tern: MEB 7 Jun.

Royal Tern: 2 MEB 6-8 Jun; others early Aug thru; n end of Robin's I 14 Aug increasing to 20 by end of season.

Com. Tern: 7 nests by the JBWE Least Tern colony, a modest return to a former extensive nesting site.

Least Tern: 480 probable nests counted by nature center staff JBWE, a considerable increase over last year.

Black Tern: reports in early Jun, late Jun; scattered reports along entire south shore Jul-Aug.

Black Skimmer: pr frequented a nesting area during the summer JBWE, but no evidence of successful breeding, may foretell a return to an area that had previously harbored a major colony; frequent sight over both CP and PP lakes thru.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Monk Parakeet: 12+ PBP 27 Jul.

Black-billed Cuckoo: numerous reports all parts Reg.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: numerous reports all parts Reg.

Barn Owl: 2 Brookhaven near Squassux Landing 12 Aug; JBWR 26 Aug.

Com. Nighthawk: feeding over Big Reed Pd, Montauk County P, East Hampton, possible breeder.

Long-eared Owl: Caumsett SP, possible breeder.

Chuck-will's-widow: calling Poxabogue County P 17, 23 Jun; calling Hither Hills SP 27 Jun.

Whip-poor-will: numbers seem much reduced throughout SUFF this season (KF, Atlas Reg Coor).

Red-headed Woodpecker: East Marion 7 Jun; Breezy Pt 29 Aug.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: PP 5 Jun; CP 8 Jun; PP 24, 27 Aug; CP 13, 24, 26 Aug.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER: MNSA 24-25 Jul (PW, KC).

Philadelphia Vireo: CP 16-17 Aug; PP 17 Aug.

Cliff Swallow: VCP 20 July; 2 GR Aug 28.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: PP 24, 28 Aug; CP 26-27 Aug.

“Brewster’s” Warbler: William Cullen Bryant Preserve, Roslyn, possible breeder; Riverdale section BRON 2, 5 Aug; PP 24, 30 Aug; CP 30 Aug.

“Lawrence’s” Warbler: m Montauk County P East Hampton 30 May, singing Blue-winged song, possible breeder.

Prothonotary Warbler: CP 6 Jun; Great Kills P SI 15 Aug.

Worm-eating Warbler: Silver L golf course SI 7 Jun; Rt 51 bicycle path sw RIV 19 Jun; CP 28 Jun; Ridge 9 Jul; APP 18 Aug; FP 19 Aug; PP 24, 28, 30 Aug;

CP 24, 26, 30, 31 Aug; others

Kentucky Warbler: CP 31 Aug.

CONNECTICUT WARBLER: banded FTT 6 Jun (JS, TW, KAm); Brooklyn Botanic Garden 16 Aug, earliest record is 15 Aug; PP 25, 28 Aug.

Hooded Warbler: Mashomack Shelter I 2-20 Jun.

Yellow-breasted Chat: MP 10 Jun; SI 19 Jun; 2 CP 27-28 Aug; RMSP 25 Aug; PP 30 Aug.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Summer Tanager: singing m HLSP 1 Jun.

Vesper Sparrow: 2 Gabreski Airport 29 Jun, 12 Jul.

Lark Sparrow: singing JBWE 14 Jun (RMG).

Grasshopper Sparrow: reports only from SUFF grasslands.

Blue Grosbeak: imm Northville 3 Jun; singing m Manorville 8 Jun; pr Rt 51 sw RIV 8 Jun-end Jul.

Bobolink: breeding again on SI after ~28 yr. absence (HF); m Rt 51 path RIV 12 Jul; 3 m on territory Wainscott Pd East Hampton, probable breeder; 2 CP 6 Aug; MNSA 19 Aug; PP 23 Aug; 12 GR 28 Aug; JBWR 30 Aug.

E. Meadowlark: evidence of breeding GR.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: feeder Orient Beach SP 21-22 Aug (MLL).

Orchard Oriole: now nesting SI, CP, PP; western range extensions from last Atlas.

Evening Grosbeak: feeder Ridge 16 Jun (JH).



STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS

Regional rarities appear in BOLD; county names are shortened to their first four letters and appear in UPPER CASE letters; months are shortened to their first three letters. In species accounts: number of individuals omitted implies that one individual was reported; ! - details seen by Regional Editor; ad - adult; Alt - Alternate plumage; Am. - American; arr - arrival or first of season; BBS - Breeding Bird Survey; BOTS - bird of the season; CBC - Christmas Bird Count; CO - confirmed nesting; Com. - Common; E. - Eastern; FL - fledgling; FY -adult feeding young; I - Island; imm - immature; intro - see introduction to report; juv - juvenile; L - Lake; max - maximum; mob - multiple observers; N. - Northern; NYSDEC - New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; NWR - National Wildlife Refuge; NYSARC - report to New York State Avian Records Committee; P -park; Pd- Pond; ph - photographed; Pt -Point; Res - Reservoir; Ri - River; SP - State Park; spm - specimen; subad -subadult; T - Town of; thru - throughout period; Twn - township; W. - Western; WMA - Wildlife Management Area; y - young.

REPORTING REGIONS

Regional boundaries coincide with county lines, except at:

Region 1-Region 2 in Orleans, Genesee and Wyoming Counties:

the boundary is NY Route 98 from Pt. Breeze to Batavia;
NY Route 63 from Batavia to Pavilion, and NY Route 19
from Pavilion to the Allegany County line.

Region 2-Region 3 in Ontario County:

the boundary is Mud Creek to NY Route 64, NY Route 64
from Bristol Center to S. Bristol Springs, and Route 21
from S. Bristol Springs to the Yates County line.

Region 3-Region 5 in Cayuga County:

the boundary is NY Route 31.

REPORTING DEADLINES

Winter Season: December, January, February

Deadline is 7 March

Spring Season: March, April, May

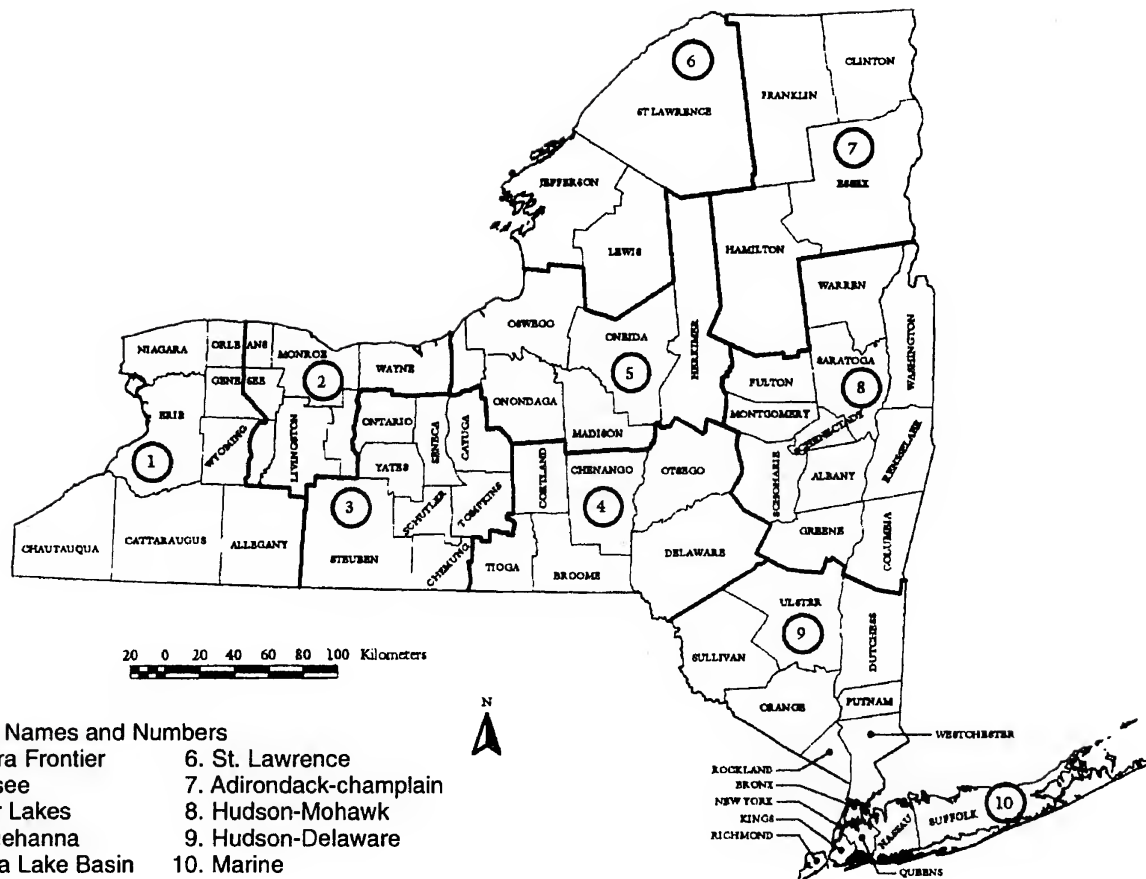
Deadline is 7 June

Summer Season: June, July, August

Deadline is 7 September

Fall Season: September, October, November

Deadline is 7 December



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